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THE TIMES

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

APRIL 17 1981

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Looking for the middle way

By J.R. Vincent

SHIRLEY WILLIAMS: Politics is for People
216pp. Allen Lane. £8.50 (Penguin)
paperback, £2.50.
0 7139 1423 8

MATTHEW OAKESHOTT: The Road from Limehouse to Westminster
Prospects for a Radical Re-alignment at the General Election
25pp. Radical Centre for Democratic Studies, 46 Bath Road, London W4, £5.

MICHAEL STEED AND DAVID FAULK: 'First Past the Post'

The Great British Class Handicap
Opp. Liberal Action Group for Electoral Reform, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1, 15p.

Shirley Williams's book, her first, is about "the crisis of industrialism facing Britain today" which calls for "a quantum jump... a leap to a new approach", the present life going deeper than "the world economy pulling a muscle" or the exhaustion of "the conventional thinking of the post-war years... based on constant economic growth". It is not about party politics. It could have been written by an ageing Conservative, Liberal or Labour politician. The idea of a Social Democrat party does not appear. How unlike a conventional politician! When she should be grudging her opponents into the dust, she produces a fair-minded tract on the future of the Third World, the merits of the West German apprenticeship system, and the effects of the microchip. But so it is.

Social democracy appears, fleetingly, as meaning Kautsky, Robert Owen, Tawney ("marvellously frightened"). "Owen and Tawney are to political thought what Vaughan Williams was to music: pastoral, gentle, and humane." Tawney's "High Anglicanism, as usual, is hidden; indeed "his socialism owes a great deal to the nonconformist tradition of brotherhood". Politics is treated throughout in purely secular language. Mrs Williams is a Christian, a Christian politician. Rather the reverse, the exclusion of religion is almost pointed. Abortion and other "Home Office" issues do not figure, and the "enrichment of the quality of human life" for which she calls as a replacement for economic growth is simply a matter of institutional change.

If Mrs Williams is the heiress to anyone, it is not to Tawney, but to the romantic paternalism of the Macmillan era. It is not easy for her to look ahead, when she is so rooted in a past where ministers were judged by their ability to draw up spending programmes. The future she would like to have is really the early 1960s writ large. She looks back to that period as Gibbon looked back to the age of the Antonines. It was a lost Keynesian heyday, when deficit finance was virtuously contra-cyclical, and small inflation could not lead to large inflation. It must not be forgotten that Mrs Williams first entered both Parliament and office in 1964, and a faint scent of National Plan and Brown Papers still clings to her.

Politics is for People is very much the sort of book that has always been written at the bottom of trade cycles in the belief that nothing will ever be the same again. A reader ignorant enough to benefit from a rather rapid tour of her rather small governmental horizon may perhaps learn here what everyone else has learnt elsewhere. Mrs Williams's smattering of politics and economics are no better and no worse than other people's smatterings, though distinctly more lucid and readable than those of her colleague Dr Owen. Indeed, they are notably similar. If you sit in a *Guardian* women down to write on the present ills, nine of them would set off on the road that leads through E. F. Schumpeter, Barbara Ward, Even Luard and Fred Hirsch to the proposition that "small is beautiful", making a statutory but perhaps rather contradictory detour in the direction of the grandiose conceptions of the Brandt report. Mrs Williams differs from the other nine only in adding the caveat "simply to state these proposals is to emphasize how improbable their adoption is". She does not explore the really important question why some plans (OEC, Sainsbury) are

good and others bad.

She has seen the microelectronic future and it works (except for the girls in the typing pool, who will lose their jobs). Work will increasingly be done at home. Microchips will "reunite the family", and, bless us, "human beings will be made whole again", as the economic system becomes subject to "the requirements of the whole human being". Apple-cheeked women will sit at cottage doors, children playing at their feet, while optic fibres enable them to follow stock prices or microprocessors give them their daily dose of continuing education. We have here a pretty mix of Wilson's white heat of the technological revolution, English socialist nostalgia about the future, English upper-class "back to the land" notions, and a dogmatic disbelief in the eternal virulence of sin and/or class conflict. The microchip becomes the symbol of the traditional English fads.

the question of what to do with 16-19-year-olds, are creating a new consensus about the main objectives in education. She recognizes, as few politicians and fewer economists seem to do, that the general state of the economy is not a very good key to the workings of the labour market. (For instance, much of the present strain arises from an increase between 1976 and 1982 of 1,100,000 in those seeking work. Unusually low retirements have coincided with the arrival of the Macmillan baby boom on the labour market.)

Mrs Williams sees the unions, the welfare state, and the politicians as each in their different ways devouring their young; the unions by making the wage costs of employing non-adult or less skilled labour uneconomic, the welfare state by raising the non-wage costs of employment to menacing levels, and the politi-

see doing an easy wrong, but one would like to see more evidence that she is capable of a difficult right in the central areas of policy.

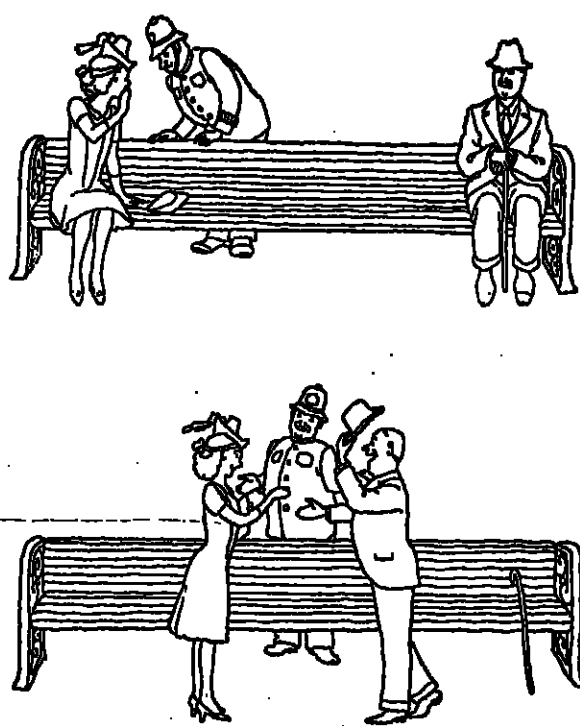
She very rarely attempts to tackle questions unless they can be answered benevolently and within the moral terminology of the prosperous intelligentsia. (The exception is her contempt for unilateral British nuclear disarmament.) At times her power to "moralize" her material approaches genius. She is the only politician to have seen the need to popularize the EEC as a vehicle of social justice, an embodiment of moral concern, a sort of Liberal party of the world. She can carry student audiences with her on this theme till one can hear a pin drop. She can even square the circle by coming out firmly against the CAP, yet holding "there is a good egalitarian argument for maintaining the incomes of small farmers". (There had better be.) Mrs Wil-

policy are peripheral to her vision. She is remarkably good at humanizing evils, less good at stopping them. In 1975 she humanized inflation by taking twopenny off butter. Now she wants to humanize unemployment by taking youth off the streets. Youth is her constituency, as it was Eden's; she instinctively backs it against organized labour. She was educated to spend, not to earn, and would no doubt do it very well. Her class role, like that of Mr Benn, is to find ways of transferring the surplus product of industry into such channels as destiny and an Oxford education shall devise. Her new party is Britain's first true class party of the middle class, Liberal voters by comparison being a cross-section of society. The Social Democrats represent a genuine sociological tension within the nation, not just a clash of factions within Labour.

"Practical politics", she writes, "is about ruling classes, bureaucrats, parties, lobbies, interests, and advancement." Well, yes, it is, and her case is no exception. She represents a permanent tension between the state intelligentsia, the quality press, and privileged youth, on the one hand, and "the deep conservatism of governments, firms, and unions" on the other. The coalition behind her consists of those who have ideas but little power, property, or seniority, and she represents it well. She faces those who have power, property and seniority, but few ideas. It is force against force, for the power to define a national agenda or create a mood, which she embodies, is as great as the power to frustrate it. We, like the French, have our *grandes écoles* of public life. One is the political world of Oxford. The other is the higher journalism, especially financial journalism. Both stand for reason and movement against the untidy sprawl and torpor of reality. With the advent of the Social Democrats, this central tension of post-war history has risen to the surface in clearer form than before.

What then are the prospects for the new party? This is a matter on which predictions have varied wildly. At first it was seen essentially as a Labour split, a reason for Mrs Thatcher sleeping soundly in her bed. Supported though this was by the quite unprecedented lack of positive public support for Mr Foot, it was denied by the failure of the breakaway group to take with it the Campaign for Labour Victory, their base within mainstream Labour. Indeed, the short-term impact of the SD secession has been to strengthen the parliamentary Right within the Labour party. Meanwhile Conservative MPs did their sums, and did not like what they saw. A Liberal revival, hitherto puzzlingly absent during this parliament, was beginning to flood in space under an unaccustomed name. By-elections were ruthlessly suppressed. The Liberals in turn had cause to worry when it became clear that under "prompted" questioning, their vote was far from secure. From Social Democrat attack. By the time of launching, the new group had failed dismally to do what it had hoped (in winning support from Labour's parliamentary Broad Right, from any "moderate" union, from the well-funded Co-op, from European Social Democracy, or from the surprisingly hostile press). Yet it had progressed from being a Labour Party split to being an incalculable change in the structure of parties. Commentators recognized this. Peregine Worshtorne hailed it as a Suburban Liberation Movement suited to a suburban country: Ivor Crewe, the Essex opinion analyst, predicted that the next election would be about the place of the Social Democrats in the party system. All this in three months - during which unprompted support for, even recognition of, the existence of the SDs on their own, remained painfully low. It is the public, and the "prompted" polls, which have created a still non-existent Liberal/SD alliance, whose electoral potential, in the absence of by-elections, can only be examined in the light of some mildly surprising psephological considerations.

In 'First Past the Post', an academic study by two Liberal psephologists, a careful reworking of figures shows how the Liberals suffer, much not just from being a third party, but from being a third party which is also a non-class party. The most startling result is that (assuming the SDs did not exit) when the three parties all have 33 per cent of the vote, the outcome in English seats would be Labour 253, Conservative 207, and Liberal 56. Even if the Liberal vote



These Heath Robinson cartoons, which depict one member of the London Constabulary "introducing total strangers in the park", and another striding out in "new evening uniform for police duties in the West End", are taken from *How to Build a New World* (136pp. £5.95/750 13343) which will be published later this month by Duckworth with *How to Make the Best of Things* (120pp. £5.95/0 7156 1333 5). Cecil Hunt collaborated with Heath Robinson on the texts of both these books.



John P. Mackintosh

Trivia by the ton

By E.S. Turner

JOHN MAY:
Curious Facts
319pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
0 436 27438 8

John May, editor of this book, writes: "Curiously defined by Isaac Asimov as 'the desire to know.' That is how the dictionary defines it, though Asimov may have reached his conclusion independently. And what is the name for the process whereby people lose interest in the world about them? This is 'described by Lionel McColvin ... as the decay of curiosity'."

With props like Asimov and McColvin to sustain him, Mr May feels emboldened to invoke Foucault and Borges to justify the assemblage of what his publishers call a "cornucopia of trivia". But he gives the game away on page 3, where he reveals that the book is an offshoot of two earlier works by himself and his "group", *An Index of Possibilities and Worlds Within Worlds*. "Throughout these years we had been accumulating unusual information that didn't readily fit into any neat category, but which became impossible to throw away."

There is, of course, no need to apologize for compiling books of trivia; people have been doing it for generations. Robert L. Ripley, to whom May nods in passing, made a fortune from his syndicated *Believe It Or Not!* If the information collected is useless, so much the better; one can have too much of relevance and significance. Mulhall's *Dictionary of Statistics*, a work now rarely found in public libraries, used to record the chest measurements and lifting power of telegraph girls and the respective weights of burglars and Fellows of the Royal Society.

All the reader has a right to ask of a book called *Curious Facts* is that the items are really facts and reasonably curious. It is quickly obvious that May and his group have not tried hard enough. Their pages are filled out with sayings, fables, extrapolations and the dubious "discoveries" of attention-seeking psychologists, sociologists, professors of journalism and the like. All too few of

the statements are checkable, since sources are not given. Among obvious errors is the attribution of the dying monarch's rejection of Bognor to Edward VII.

Here is a brief sampling:

Amphetamines improve the ability of monkeys to read facial expressions.

More than 15 per cent of Americans secretly bite their toenails, according to a psychologist at Brigham Young University.

Dr Joyce Brothers claims that the average American woman kisses 79 men before marriage.

[The Armenian micro-artist Edward Kazarian] polished a hair with diamond dust, hollowed it out, and inserted three hundred carved elephants inside it.

Note that the first statement is not attributed to any scientist, social or otherwise, but is passed on as a received truth. The second comes from a psychologist who is not thought to be worth naming; perhaps the fact we are supposed to find curious is that Brigham Young University employs such persons (surely not 15 per cent of Americans could get their teeth anywhere near their toenails?). The third assertion is from a "doctor" who is named but not otherwise identified. Only the fourth item appears to record a fact, in so far as it purports to be a record of something which actually happened; but in the absence of supportive detail the reader must do as the boy Darwin's elders did when he told tall tales and "withhold the coveted expression of surprise".

As for the fanciful extrapolations, what is one to say of this: "A powerful lightning bolt has enough energy to lift a large ocean liner six feet into the air?" Even the readers of *The Wizard*, in which such items used to appear, would have balked at the specificity of six feet in this context. However, such doubts do not worry the statisticians of *Curious Facts*. They tell of a strong-smelling substance secreted by the female gypsy moth which, if a gram were released in a single puff, would still be detectable by male moths a million years later. However, they shy from the calculations of temperature changes which would result if the polar icecaps were dyed "to decrease the energy they reflect"; all they can tell us is

that, if this were done, the climate of Iceland would become like that of Hawaii.

The assiduous searcher is bound to find some rewarding facts in this book. Who would not wish to know about the canine oral vice called pika which makes a dog behave like a vacuum cleaner? Or about those recurrent panics over penis shrinkage in the Far East? However, there are some strangely uninteresting items, usually about people in show business. Nothing could be less surprising than the ten rules laid down by "Fred Silverman, the wizard of US TV programming". We are told, *tout court*, that the author of a famous stage shocker, whose name it seems unnecessary to repeat here, died of syphilis. What is so curious about that? What do the group think all those French poets died of? If they wanted a few bogging facts in this area they should have researched into the great syphilis pandemic of the late fifteenth century. Alas, they are not greatly interested in olden times, preferring the froth of twentieth-century headlines.

There are minor blemishes. May quotes from a tale by De L'isle Adam, published in 1883, in which the night sky is envisaged as a background for advertising corsets. There is an obvious link, which has been made before now, with the experiments in projecting advertisements on the clouds conducted many years ago in both America and Britain; yet this information is not given. Was it perhaps lost in the general excitement of compilation?

Although the book has a strong American slant, there are numerous tidbits for the British reader. It seems that the (Grand Old) Duke of York lined a corridor of his mansion with the teeth of horses killed at Waterloo; which is curious enough, but not as curious as the fact that British citizens wore "Waterloo teeth" scavenged from the battlefields (as from the battlefields of the Peninsula) by self-employed gentlemen with sacks.

Gastronomes may be surprised to learn that Britain has a gourmet service (unnamed here) which will supply a doctored, electrocuted and skinned, for \$55. Social historians will find this revelation by Mr May's group even more surprising: "In the twenties and thirties there was at least one roller hockey rink in every town in Britain. When the war came they were all converted into drill halls, and the game vanished."

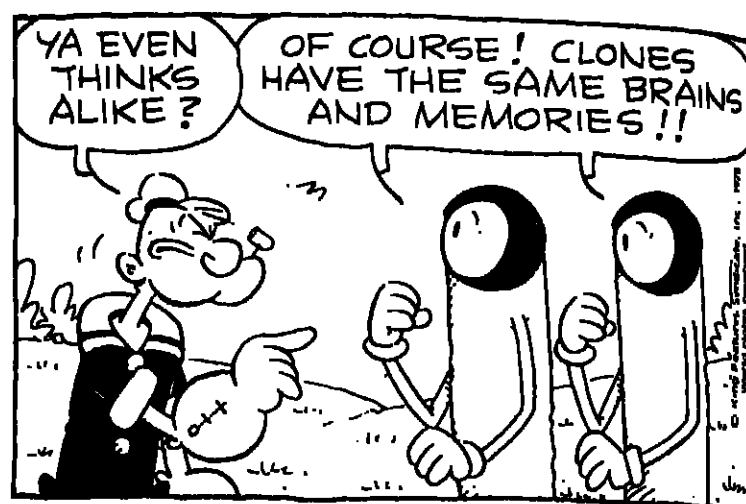
seventeenth century, when the Lestonnac family formed the property into roughly what we know today. Thereafter for two centuries although the name of the owner changed as it thrice passed through the female line, it effectively remained in the hands of one family, establishing its reputation and traditions. It was sequestered during the French Revolution, but bought back two years later by the last owner's young niece, Laure Fumel, a formidable woman. But able as she was, she could not raise the money without the aid of Bordeaux merchants, who did very well out of it. In 1802 it was put up for auction and bought by a complete outsider, Beltran Doust, a Basque merchant who had acquired a spare title, Marquis de la Colonille, from a Spanish noble family. His interest, alas, was not really in the wine, but posterity owes a great debt to him. Like many of the newly rich, he had visions of grandeur, and it was he who built the present chateau.

Twenty years after Colonilla's death his children sold out to Alexandre Agado, Marquis de las Marismas, an immensely rich Spanish banker and the patron of Rossini. In 1879 it passed to another banker, Comte Pittet-Vill, who on this occasion had made a bad investment, for this Médoc was hit simultaneously by a world slump and by two disastrous diseases of the vine: mildew and phylloxera. In 1921 it was sold again, to a syndicate, but by 1934 it was once more on the market, the victim of another slump and a succession of bad years.

It was rescued by Fernand Chinet, who set to work to reconstruct the estate and bring back its ancient glory. But the stuff had brought about irregularities. For instance, 109,000 bottles of the rather light 1933 vintage were not bottled until 1981 had been in cask for four years instead of the customary two, and it is not surprising that the wine's reputation came under a cloud. The Chinet family largely

restored the chateau's reputation but in the 1960s the estate was once again in a decline and when another slump struck in the 1970s it forced them to sell. A vast American enterprise, National Distillers, wanted to buy, but the French Government would not let them. Eventually a foreigner did buy it. A Greek, André Mentzeopoulos, who had made a fortune importing grain into Pakistan, had married a Frenchwoman and had applied his fortune to building up the old-established grocery chain of Félix Poth. He immediately undertook such massive works as removing a layer of clay over a foot thick from the subsoil of an otherwise classic site. Since this book appeared, alas, M. Mentzeopoulos has died, but his work will surely bear fruit.

The Debrét Season edited and compiled by Adam Helliker (219pp. Debrét's Peasage Ltd. £3.95, 0 905649 47 8), sub-titled "A light-hearted romp through the social and sporting year" is the latest volume in the publisher's list of general etiquette books. It gives a summary of the main events of the London season and contains articles or particular events such as Badminton, Glyndebourne, Ascot, Henley and Crufts and on more general topics such as "Oxbridge Ball", "Pheasant Shooting", and "Weddings". More up-to-date social needs are covered by essays on "Benignolite Nouveau" and "Down on the Health Farm". Among the information on balls and nightclubs, there is advice on how to get there, what to wear and what to wear and a list of important dates in 1981, but the emphasis is on the historical, ritual and aristocratic nature of what the editor claims is "all alive and if anything more popular than ever". The book is illustrated with cartoons from *Punch* and its pages of advertising.



Popeye facing the problem of genetic engineering. A cartoon from 1978 which appears in Popeye: The First Fifty Years by Bud Sagendorf (143pp. Virgin Books. £3.95, 0 90708162 2).

Fashions by the fistful

By Andrew Hislop

ANDY WARHOL and PAT HACKETT:
POPism
The Warhol '60s
310pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.
0 09 144580 9

Those who aspire to social élites drop names; those who belong to them drop people. Andy Warhol loves to drop names and collect people; and *POPism: The Warhol '60s* is no book for sufferers from this roller-coaster vertigo. The high point from which this roller-coaster plunges is Truman Capote's "part of the decade" (1966) at the Plaza hotel where "you couldn't look over your shoulder without dropping thirty names". Describing the event, Warhol manages to slip twenty-four in one sentence (thirty-four in the whole paragraph). But even he found this marriage of reality and the social register "surreal" — "a perfect affair for *Mad* magazine to cartoon".

Warhol is now Establishment — Inaugural balls and all — but his status is a fulfillment rather than a denial of his nascent Pop persona: "I can't see how I was ever 'underground', since I've always wanted people to notice me." (Truman Capote and his mother first noticed Warhol when he, uncollected, started phoning them up every day). Counter-culture never precluded him from an understanding, even a celebration, of the currency of artistic success: "What survives (of art) is what the taste of the ruling class of the period decrees should survive and this turns out to be the most effective work done within the canons and terms of that class." One evening in the early 1960s, when he asked for suggestions for his work, "one lady friend of mine asked me the right question: 'Well, what do you love most?' That's how I started painting money."

"You need a good gallery so the 'ruling class' will notice you," Warhol remarks. He went one better. He created a human gallery around himself at his studio; "The Factory". "I just paid the rent and the crowds simply came because the door was open." (The humans on show at a Warhol exhibition in Philadelphia were so numerous that the paintings had to be removed because they were getting crushed). This "gallery" was a motley collection fuelled on drugs, ego and sex or the lack of it. (Warhol makes the pertinent distinction in an earlier book, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, between those that gain and those that lose energy from sex — he himself seems to lack even the energy to put himself to this glandular profit or loss test.) The Factory itself formed a social élite which was useful both to what Warhol sees as lying behind the major confrontations of the 1960s: "the minor scuffles at doorways to parties". If society ladies were not eager to join this farrago, they were prepared to allow its members into their homes, encouraged no doubt by the words of one acolyte: "There's this madman named Warhol who brings his entourage into your house and apparently makes an entire movie in an afternoon. You must meet him." The desirability of a Warhol presence for social or commercial promotion became such that undesired limousines would arrive at the Factory, and a delegation would pile into them not knowing what social function they were going to grace or disgrace.

The centre of all this attention soon realized that the personality of "Andy Warhol" was too important to be left to Andy Warhol's penon. His passivity (dictated

notwithstanding) and his penchant for cloning in life as well as art made him a deity in the adoption of his self by another. One of the "Superstars" (as he called his washed-up followers), his hair sprayed short, went as Warhol on a college lecture tour (the colleges were not amused when they discovered, months later, that they had been sent a ringer). A dancer, hoping to be in a Warhol movie, followed a stunt around for a whole year thinking that he was the man himself. Warhol's cavalier attitude to his position of subjectivity on one occasion even got the better of his business acumen when he told a *West Coast* magazine that "I don't even do my own painting". A hasty public denial was needed to calm the world's art dealers. Though happy to have others use his name, Warhol was less than content when he was given the nickname "Drella" — a linguistic collaboration between Dracula and Cinderella.

Collaboration was an important part of the Warhol Factory production, particularly of the films, and *POPism* was written by Pat Hackett who wrote the screenplay for Warhol's *Had ...* (a "Drella" movie there ever was one). Billed as a reconstruction of the decade the book often offers a particular choice of historical landmarks: "Underground" wouldn't completely disappear until '68, and singular social analysis: "I could never finally figure out if more things happened in the sixties because ... or if more people started taking complete notice because there were so many things to do." The sartorial and glambour as much as the theoretical differences between Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art are discussed. (The Abstract Expressionists are made, hokeyy nullists, the Pop Artists somewhat less virile in appearance and practice). We learn of Warhol's obsession with Webster Pileasus had heard of him and that when Kennedy was assassinated not only did dealers will be glad to hear) was he painting, he did not miss a brush stroke.

POPism, however, is less amusing than *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* which being almost free of proper names, has to mitigate what distaste one may have for Warhol persona with sustained, genuine wit. Instead, we are fed with passages of apology which attempts to distance one from responsibility for human casualties among his entourage: "It wasn't his someone was issuing me newborn babies with good chemicals and letting me use them." Though at times claiming ignorance of much of the human self-destruction around him, Warhol does notice the blood of a shooting-up superstar "spurt in a strobe flash across Pauline de Rothschild and Cecil Beaton" (the names helped no doubt) and that "a girl always looked naive and fragile when she was about to have a nervous breakdown". He remarks of one superstar: "Sure he was off drugs (I supposed), and I was glad for him (I supposed), but it was so boring."

If you're dead after being shot your books get reprinted; if you survive you have to write at least one more about getting shot. Warhol, having survived an assassination attempt from a member of the Society for Cutting Up Men, feels as he admits, would have been seen as a martyr. But his status as an artist or a moral being is not greatly enhanced by his attempts, which include a videotaped poster to his friends from the 1960s who made the final drop out (literally in the case of Freddy who danced out of a window in his death). The novelty book of the early sixties, *A Thousand New York Names and Where to Drop Them* got it about right when they listed "Andy Warhol" under "Fashion".

JEAN-LOUIS QUERMONE:
Le Gouvernement de la France sous la V^e République
682pp. Paris: Dalloz.
ALAIN DUHAMEL:
La République giscardienne
249pp. Paris: Grasset.
CHARLES HARGROVE:
L'Autre Giscard
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing vu par un Ang-
lais
212pp. Paris: Editions J.A.
CATHERINE NAY:
La double méprise
295pp. Paris: Grasset.
FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND:
Ici et maintenant
Conversations avec Guy Claisse
309pp. Paris: Fayard.
JEAN-PAUL JOUARY and others:
Giscard et ses idées
235pp. Paris: Editions Sociales.

The reports of September 1980 in France was particularly rich in anticipation: everyone was preparing for the Presidential election of 1981. It was expected that Georges Marchais would set things going at the "Fête de l'Humanité" in the second week of the month, by announcing that he was to be the candidate of the Communist party, thus putting an end to speculations that the party would avoid committing itself to having its secretary-general as its candidate and would put forward instead a candidate who could do poorly without seriously damaging the party's reputation (such as a woman, Odile Moreau, or a parliamentarian, Robert Bellanger). Then, it was thought that the Socialists would decide between François Mitterrand, the eternal runner-up in presidential races (he stood in both 1965 and 1974, and compared himself to Raymond Poincaré, a cyclist who was a champion but who never won a race) and Michel Rocard, who was (or who had been made to appear) more youthful, more dynamic and more appealing. And the communist and socialist candidates having declared themselves, it was thought that the Presidential race would then settle down and proceed normally, with a weary monotony.

But this did not happen. Although M. Marchais pre-empted the communist candidature as expected, the campaign did not begin last September. It had already begun. Brice Lalonde had been touring the beaches throughout the summer and Roger Garaudy had been publishing his philosophy, both in the name of the ecological movement; M. Rocard had been photographed with his family in his summer house in the Morbihan, and a fellow-socialist, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, let it be known that he too was in the running as a possible candidate; the much respected former prime minister, Michel Debré, gave frequent interviews and was claimed to represent the authentic voice of Gaullism; a welter of Maoists, anarchists, independent Marxists, traditionalist Catholics, Bretons desperados, consumer-protection leaders, feminists, Occidentals, right-wing extremists and other individuals announced that they too wished to run.

Thus the *rentrée* was an anti-climax. All the more so when the big candidates refused to say whether or not they were standing. Mitterrand was joined in a would-be enigmatic silence by the official Gaullist leader, Jacques Chirac. Above all, Giscard d'Estaing gave no indication whether he was seeking re-election. It was said that the younger leaders, such as René Crépeau (the left-wing radical) and Chirac himself, were getting ready for the Presidential election of 1988 (so why can't we have the 1988 election now) asked the sophisticated and the naïf the election was a foregone conclusion (can you not see that he has been campaigning for months?) asked the exasperated Debré and would win. In September the polls were giving him an easy victory. But the rumours persisted and it was suggested that Giscard was prey to superstition, and in particular to the old Republican superstition that a second seven-year term of office was apt to be unlucky. Under the Third Republic, Jules Grévy had been forced to resign in 1887 because of scandals connected with his

The enigma of the Elysée

By Douglas Johnson

son-in-law: Albert Lebrun was swept away by the German military victory in 1940; General de Gaulle had been defeated in the 1969 referendum and immediately left office: none of these completed their second term and it was thought that Giscard would not wish to imitate them. Perhaps he too was waiting for 1988? Perhaps, thought and hoped the journalists, there was a scandal around the corner (although investigative journalism is hardly the forte of the French).

Thus the campaign had neither started nor failed to start. It was a half-and-half affair with the minor candidates adopting self-important postures and the powerful ones observing each other with ill-disguised attention while protesting that they were not yet involved in any presidential race. It was not until the end of February and the beginning of March this year that the French public was able to escape from the distractions offered by ecologists, extremists and eccentrics — who had been joined by another dissident Gaullist, Marie-France Garaud, and, for a while, and could concentrate on those candidates who represented the main structures of French political life. This was all the more surprising because a constitutional measure, taken in 1976, had sought to reduce the number of Presidential candidates by making it necessary, in order to become an official candidate, to have the written and public support of 500 holders of elected offices in at least thirty departments of France or the *territoires d'Outre-mer*. In the most recent guide to the French constitution Jean-Louis Quermone reminds us that the number of candidates in 1965 was six, in 1969 seven and in 1974 twelve, and it was felt that the multiplicity of "candidates fantasistes" could only lead to the discrediting of the Presidency as an institution. While only a small proportion of the present forty-five or so self-appointed candidates will eventually be classified as official and will appear on the ballot papers, this law of June 1976 has obviously created a new category, those who are "presential" but not "designés".

The fact is that this month's election will be the first under the Fifth Republic to be fought with universal suffrage and in normal conditions. In 1965 the presence of General de Gaulle, and the surprise of finding both radio and television made accessible to the opposition, rendered the election *hors série*. In 1969 de Gaulle had resigned, there was uncertainty about the future, there was no left-wing candidate present in the second ballot and the number of abstentions rose to more than 30 per cent. In 1974 the election followed the sudden death of Pompidou, the Gaullists were unexpectedly split, the impact of the Mitterrand-Giscard television debate was unpredictable. But 1981 has been on the horizon ever since the general elections of 1978 apparently divided France into four political families: the majority consisting of Giscardians and their Gaullist *frères ennemis*, the opposition consisting of Socialists and their Communist rivals. "One election chase l'autre". The ballots of April 26, and May 10, thus constitute a long-awaited rendez-vous, and since as long ago as November 1979, Giscard officially rejected any idea of bringing the election forward, there has been ample time for all the parties, groups and individuals to make their preparations.

There can be little doubt that the result of the election will depend upon such modifications as can be forced on the traditionally firm structures of French politics, where there are no landsheds, where certain parties seem to be assured of a permanent strength and where the division between centre-right and centre-left is very small indeed. In these circumstances the importance of the way in which Giscard presents himself to the electorate after seven years in power is undeniable, and one of the striking features of French politics at the moment is that there seems to be little consensus of opinion concerning the sort of man he is, or the sort of policies which he has adopted in the past or is likely to adopt in the future. It is strange to think that a man who was elected deputy as long ago as 1956, and who held ministerial office for some twelve years before becoming President, should now be described as "un mystère à une énigme". And this by

someone who, as an academic, political journalist, and radio and television commentator, ought to have found a way to penetrate what is difficult and obscure about the present occupant of the Elysée.

But when Alain Duhamel goes into more detail he does not make himself any clearer. He suggests that Giscard is to be understood as a combination of Disraeli and Franklin Roosevelt. But this is only to make an enigma more enigmatic still since Duhamel sees Disraeli as someone who was attached to the aristocratic side of society, but who also understood the reality of life, while Roosevelt was a convinced democrat who believed that action always required strong government. Perhaps it is a working rule that whenever a French statesman is compared to some non-French counterpart, this is a sign that the author of the comparison is baffled. Charles Hargrove, the *Times* Paris correspondent, in an elegant and perceptive book, reminds us of many of the interpretations which contemporaries have furnished, some of which are self-indulgently paradoxical. "A Stenographic social-democrat" is a neat phrase meaning very little, while Edgar Faure's statement that Giscard is not a conservative who happens to be a reformer, but a reformer who is held to be a conserva-

tive, does not get one much further. Mr Hargrove himself puts forward the idea that Giscard has to be seen in the tradition of French liberalism, but creates his own paradox when he refers to Guizot and quotes a particularly intransigent phrase from that unpopular minister, who has invariably been treated as a reactionary (there is a coincidence in the fact that Giscard's grandfather on his mother's side, Senator Jacques Bardon, whose seat in the Puy-de-Dôme he "inherited", was the last Frenchman to publish a biography of Guizot).

Catherine Nay, who knows well certain of those people who have profited most directly from Giscard's support both in their political and business careers, does not hesitate to present a wittily wicked picture of the President in which the contrasts are severe. The man who came to the Elysée in order to introduce simplicity and democracy into the life there, who thought of opening the palace to the public once a week, like the White House, and invited four dustmen to share his breakfast on Christmas morning, who revealed to the world that he dips his *croissant* in his coffee, and occasionally disappears into a mysterious private life at week-ends and in the evenings, is also the man who behaves like a monarch of the old régime. According to Catherine Nay, he told Chirac that on official occasions he should stand exactly three paces behind him, and on one occasion brought to the Conseil des Ministres a green leather blotter emblazoned with both the royal *fleur de lys* and the Imperial eagle, as if he saw himself placed firmly in both those traditions. Perhaps more puzzling still is the legend of the President who did not take his work altogether seriously ("le Président sort-il trop?" asked an anxious *Paris-Match*), yet who also worked harder than either of his two predecessors, so that Maurice Duverger once described him as "un super-président" while his trusted colleague Michel Poniatowski commented "il présidentialise à l'outrance".

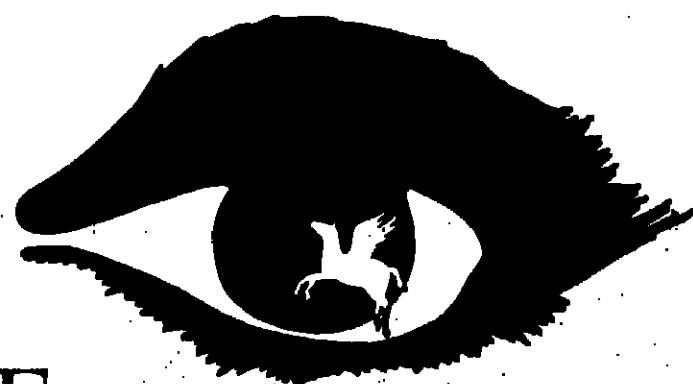
It is not difficult to imagine with what close attention Mitterrand has observed the man who bent him last time by the narrowest of margins (50.81 per cent of the votes cast, against 49.19 per cent). In his book *Ici et maintenant*, which is made up of conversations with Guy Claisse, he is particularly interested by Giscard's methods of government. He is unimpressed in his praise of him as a minister speaking in the National Assembly, presenting his budgets with lucidity and eloquence — the best parliamentary orator,

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Best Bordeaux

By Julian Jeffs

NICHOLAS FAITH:
Château Margaux
122pp. Christie's Wine Publications. £5.
0 903432 22 6

This is by no means the first book to take a single great vineyard as its subject. Cyril Ray has already written a fine history of Château Lafite, published in the same series, and in French there is the magnificent two-volume work on Château Latour prepared under the direction of Professor Huguonnet. Books on the other great growths will surely follow. Château Margaux, however, is the ideal subject, combining great wine with fascinating topics of social, architectural and economic history: subjects well suited to the author, who has already published an invaluable work on the wine families of Bordeaux and is a respected amateur of their wines.

The detailed history of the chateau goes back over three centuries and, although land has been bought and sold from time to time, its size has remained pretty constant at 600 acres — a small estate by the standards of the "great" landowners but large by those of Bordeaux, and one bearing an exceptionally valuable crop. Of this, about a third is vineyard, the rest being farmland and garden. It is just the right size to make an ideal country estate and is in an admirable position, not too far from Bordeaux, and stretching down to the Gironde. Thanks to this, through the centuries it has attracted owners rich enough to tide it over the poor vintages, and periods of depression; and, above all, to favour quality rather than quantity.

The detailed story begins in the late six-

teenth century, when the Lestonnac family formed the property into roughly what we know today. Thereafter for two centuries although the name of the owner changed as it thrice passed through the female line, it effectively remained in the hands of one family, establishing its reputation and traditions. It was sequestered during the French Revolution, but bought back two years later by the last owner's young niece, Laure Fumel, a formidable woman. But able as she was, she could not raise the money without the aid of Bordeaux merchants, who did very well out of it. In 1802 it was put up for auction and bought by a complete outsider, Beltran Doust, a Basque merchant who had acquired a spare title, Marquis de la Colonille, from a Spanish noble family. His interest, alas, was not really in the wine, but posterity owes a great debt to him. Like many of the newly rich, he had visions of grandeur, and it was he who built the present chateau.

Twenty years after Colonilla's death his children sold out to Alexandre Agado, Marquis de las Marismas, an immensely rich Spanish banker and the patron of Rossini. In 1879 it passed to another banker, Comte Pittet-Vill, who on this occasion had made a bad investment, for this Médoc was hit simultaneously by a world slump and by two disastrous diseases of the vine: mildew and phylloxera. In 1921 it was sold again, to a syndicate, but by 1934 it was once more on the market, the victim of another slump and a succession of bad years.

It was rescued by Fernand Chinet, who set to work to reconstruct the estate and bring back its ancient glory. But the stuff had brought about irregularities. For instance, 109,000 bottles of the rather light 1933 vintage were not bottled until 1981 had been in cask for four years instead of the customary two, and it is not surprising that the wine's reputation came under a cloud. The Chinet family largely

restored the chateau's reputation but in the 1960s the estate was once again in a decline and when another slump struck in the 1970s it forced them to sell. A vast American enterprise, National Distillers, wanted to buy, but the French Government would not let them. Eventually a foreigner did buy it. A Greek, André Mentzeopoulos, who had made a fortune importing grain into Pakistan, had married a Frenchwoman and had applied his fortune to building up the old-established grocery chain of Félix Poth. He immediately undertook such massive works as removing a layer of clay over a foot thick from the subsoil of an otherwise classic site. Since this book appeared, alas, M. Mentzeopoulos has died, but his work will surely bear fruit.

The Debrét Season edited and compiled by Adam Helliker (219pp. Debrét's Peasage Ltd. £3.95, 0 905649 47 8), sub-titled "A light-hearted romp through the social and sporting year" is the latest volume in the publisher's list of general etiquette books. It gives a summary of the main events of the London season and contains articles or particular events such as Badminton, Glyndebourne, Ascot, Henley and Crufts and on more general topics such as "Oxbridge Ball", "Pheasant Shooting", and "Weddings". More up-to-date social needs are covered by essays on "Benignolite Nouveau" and "Down on the Health Farm". Among the information on balls and nightclubs, there is advice on how to get there, what to wear and what to wear and a list of important dates in 1981, but the emphasis is on the historical, ritual and aristocratic nature of what the editor claims is "all alive and if anything more popular than ever". The book is illustrated with cartoons from *Punch* and its pages of advertising.

JULIAN JEFFS

he thinks, since Pierre Cot (others might have said since Paul Reynaud). Equally, he praises his accomplishments as a television performer. "Avec lui, on entend la télévision respirer." Le triomphe des pousseurs d'acier. But this carefully prepared mastery of the spoken word is not sufficient. To it must be added the complete control and direction of the national radio and television services. It is not enough to be able to convince, one must also suppress all opposition. Mitterand recalls that when he was interviewed by Jacqueline Baudrier, the director of Franco-Inter, she asked him what programme he listened to. He replied that he listened to Franco-Inter, because in that way he always knew what the government was thinking.

The Communists naturally insist that Giscard controls the information media since no member of their own party is in any position of importance in French television or radio. But the authors of *Giscard et les idées* are more directly concerned by the ideology to be found in the *discours présidentiel*. Giscard is the purveyor of a myth: the myth that there is, away from the tumult of political life, from Parisian fashions of thought and superficial agitation, a real and authentic France, "la France profonde", "la France réelle", "la France vraie", to which he appeals and which responds to him. Yet, at the same time, Giscard believes that over the past twenty-five years France has been subjected to a hurricane of change, a more powerful revolution than any political revolution, which has transformed all the structures of "le monde tranquille"—family, school, university, church, everything has been affected, and no-one can do anything about it. Naturally the Communists complain about a revolution which has taken place without them; it is perhaps natural too that they should point to certain fashionable thinkers, such as Alain Touraine and Michel Crozier, who are (they say) in vogue with the socialists and who adopt a Giscardian attitude of resignation when they contemplate this revolution. But what emerges from their analysis is the contrast between a Giscard who claims to be in touch with "la France profonde" and the Giscard who believes in profound changes about which he can do nothing.

It is a pity that the leading French newspaper, *Le Monde*, has hardly tried to penetrate the enigma of Giscard. Perhaps as a result of certain disputes between the present government and the newspaper, the President has inspired his writers to satire. They have noted that the more the rate of inflation grew, and the higher the level of unemployment, then the greater the popularity ratings of the President. Thus he seems certain to win the election. With the prospect of the one man accumulating two septennats, they publish the formula $7 + 7 = 0$. There was also a nice confusion between the British royal wedding announcement (February 24) and Giscard's announcement of his candidature in *Figaro-Magazine* (February 25): was Prince Charles going to marry Lady Di for seven years only? When the President's office published the statistic that he met his earlier prime minister Chirac on the 4th of 210 times, and his current prime minister M. Barre 560 times, *Le Monde* commented that a leader who had had tea so frequently with Chirac and with Barre could not be all bad. His private telephone number was given too, for those who remember the old Paris exchanges: BA.Gaellie 74-81. Coudage was never treated like this.

It is inevitable that there should be a considerable difference in the way in which Giscard is being presented in 1981, as compared with 1974. Then he was young, intelligent, successful, with a brilliantly effortless career behind him and an assuredly distinguished career ahead. But now, the very fact that he has enjoyed power for so long is a disadvantage. What was thought of as ability and self-confidence can now be held to be pretension and conceit. Like Quixote, he has to face the opposition of many who would normally support his ideology, but who have been excluded from the benefits of his patronage. Like ex-president Carter he is the subject of easy speculation as to which of his mistakes it will be that will cause his defeat (Giscard d'Estaing?). The union leader, Edmond Millaud, predicted a long time ago that unemployment was the "la zetta" attached to Giscard's coat-tails. Others have pointed to his government's haste to declare that the murder of his former colleague, the Prince de Broglie, was a case that had been solved when it has not, or to the scandal of his association with ex-emperor Bokassa and the persistence of rumours concerning a gift of diamonds from that source, or to the allegations that his family has grown notably in wealth and power since he became Pres-

dent. Marchais has denounced the régime of "cadeaux et châteaux", and although his fulminations are not taken seriously everywhere, there are many who speak of corruption and who would have been happy to welcome in Michel Rocard many of the technocratic qualities which they feel a head of state should possess, but which in his case appear to be allied to a Protestant strictness and morality (Rocard d'Estaing?). There are those who are worried by the increase in the powers of the state in matters of justice, and those too who believe that Giscard is soft on Soviet Russia.

Indeed it is striking that if so many writers feel Giscard is a mystery, they should so readily agree that the present state of France is precarious. Professor Quermone tells us that the government of the Fifth Republic is "fragile". Since the resignation of Chirac it no longer has a clear parliamentary majority, and exists only because the opposition is divided and because there is the threat of dissolution. In this situation, and because he has never had recourse to a referendum, Giscard has seen his attributions as President increased, but he has not increased his power; therefore he is not in a position to carry out major reforms and the régime is, allegedly, neither effective nor democratic. M. Duhamel tells us that politically France is "indivisible" and that while, industrially and socially, the country is advanced, French politics remain locked in a sort of fortress of conservatism, in which an exclusive rôle is played by the President and an élite of some 5,000 persons. Hargrove, with a finesse that is often thought of as typically French, believes that Giscard's manner of presenting his arguments and his hope of avoiding conflict (that there was no repetition in May 1978 of the events of May 1968 is one Giscardian claim to success) is inappropriate to the social tensions in present-day France and to the French tendency to seek for consensus by means of upheaval. Like many, he envisages Giscard's success in the Presidential election being followed by the victory of the Left shortly afterwards and by his enforced resignation. The possibility of some type of social explosion occurring is one of the reasons why Giscard expects voters to vote for him; it's me or chaos, he suggests, as de Gaulle did before him, but there are those who claim that if there is no change of President, no alternative in the régime, then the explosion will occur out of frustration.

It is true that France is an authoritarian state and that in such states authority is brittle and can break easily. It is true too that the prophecies of those who foresee a great economic crisis ahead are persistent and telling. But viewed in purely personal terms, the discarding of one leader only takes place when another leader is clearly acceptable in his place, as Pompidou was easily accepted as the alternative to an elderly de Gaulle, and as de Gaulle had been a welcome replacement for an unwanted Fourth Republic. Viewed in political terms no bookmaker would ignore the fact that if the Communists do not vote for Mitterand then his chances are seriously diminished. Giscard is reflective and he can be hesitant; but he is also obstinate, and he can be bold. He claims now to be *le citoyen-candidat*; since he has been praised by *Pravda* he has also been called *le commandant-candidat*; he never forgets, and never lets others forget, that he remains a man for all political families, and that is no disadvantage. But one thing is certain: whatever happens on April 26 and May 10, by next September all the commentators and all the politicians will be prophesying difficulties ahead: *La rentrée sera chaude*.

Remembrance Sunday

As I was kneeling at the altar rail,
Waiting my turn between the Bread and Wine,
I saw a beetle, in a dead straight line,
March on collision course... it could not fail.

So fatally do time and motion meet,
To fall under the ponderous, crab-like shuffle
(And though soft overshadows are worn to nuffin,
Footfall, soles are still hard) of prey-like feet

Advancing inexorably as a tank.
I look the cup and closed my eyes and drank.
And when I rose, the creature was no more.

Then a minor on stone - and then I thought I saw
A million beetles marching, rank on rank,
And priest and people making for the door.

John Goudge



Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, in his role as candidate for France's 1981 presidential election, striking an attitude of mock supplication before a campaign meeting at Nancy in March (AFP Photo).

Red giant to white dwarf

By Tony Judt

R. W. JOHNSON:
The Long March of the French Left
345pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback £8.95).
0 333 27417 2

This book is doubly timely. As a guide to the political context of the 1981 presidential election in France it is without peer, the more so as R. W. Johnson succeeds in saying a number of contentious and (as it turns out) prescient things without giving hostages to the future—the book will be useful five years hence. Of perhaps greater significance, the author has written a book about the French Left which manages to acknowledge the subject's importance without burying it in the peculiar mystique which is so marked a feature of studies of this kind in England. Quite the contrary, Johnson clearly enjoys deflating the gaseous mandarin of French Marxist discourse and his polemic is always on target. It is good to find the great man described as being nostalgic for the old days of the Stalinist PCP, or the aspect of his thinking that has taken an inordinately long time to surface in the consciousness of his admirers here and in the United States. In this and other respects *The Long March of the French Left* is a welcome and refreshing addition to the literature.

The theme of the book is the history of the Socialist and Communist movements in France from the events of May 1968, to the electoral debate of March 1978, a decade which Johnson sees as possessing a significance and unity of its own. His

way of telling the story (I use the term advisedly—he has a weakness for the racy narrative style) is to begin with some "scenes from French life" in the months of 1977 and 1978 which saw the breakdown of the pact that had endured since the signing of the Common Programme in 1972. The stage thus set, he returns to 1946 and the Tripartite governments, recounting their achievements, their breakdown and the years since. There then follows a section on the political sociology of France in the 1970s as a prelude to a close and informative analysis of the run-in to the 1978 elections, the elections themselves and their consequences, actual and forecast.

This is an original approach, but it has problems. We zip back and forth over the same ground a number of times and some subjects are thus frequently mentioned but never properly introduced; there are also a lot of intermediate summaries and suggestions which are buried in the text and never taken up. The picture is made more complex by Johnson's enormous enthusiasm for statistical data in general and opinion polls in particular—the real stars of the book are Messrs SOFRES and IFOP, who do sterling duty on every other page. This is deliberate: from the outset, the author declares his intention of basing his study on what actually happened rather than on theorists' nostrums—but it sometimes buries the argument in page-long lists of figures and thus serves to confuse rather than inform. There is also some confusion as to how much the book's potential readers already know: thus Jules Guesde is mentioned without introduction, yet we are given fifty pages on the history of post-war France, some of it in the manner of (and drawn from) George Orwell and Alexander Werth: Nothing wrong there—but anyone who needed no introduction to Guesde could probably dispense with the potted history, and vice versa.

The other difficulty is Johnson's style. His penchant for the telling phrase, the revealing anecdote and punchy chapter endings makes this much the most readable work on its subject in any language, but it does result in occasional overstatement or even "unfairness" as when it is said to be "hardly accidental" that the "left" of the Left began simultaneously with the founding of the RPF, or when Blum is said to have finished up his career "crawling about pathetically for an American loan". None of the "less" approach, however, the advantages—Johnson is a dandy of the irony, as effective in his darning of Giscard and his cronies or of Gaullist constituency gerrymandering as in his pen portraits of men of the Left. There is, in fact, a lot in the book about the Right—15 per cent of the text is devoted to Gaullism and the politics of religion—and this balance enables John-

son to make some very telling points about the electoral sociology of France and its gloomy message for Communists and Gaullists alike. What is more, there are no sacred cows; even Simone Weil gets her come-uppance (suitably camouflaged in a footnote, however).

The message of the book is best and appropriately summarized in a single statistic. In 1968, Gaullists and the PC between them polled 66 per cent of the vote; in 1978 their combined vote was just 43 per cent. The shift that has taken place has completely transformed the middle ground of French politics and has created, notwithstanding the system's tendency to favour polarization, a quasi-bilateral political struggle, with UDF and Socialists competing implicitly for the newly released centrist electorate. This has both expanded the Socialist's field of action and placed an intolerable strain on them as they strive after the centrist voters while maintaining de facto ties to the Communist alliance without which they cannot hope to win power.

In terms of election results and opinion polls, this rendering of events is loyal dispute and allows Johnson to be by the appropriate emphasis on Mitterand's party and its prospects. About the latter he is less than sanguine, and in a tellingly cryptic passage he summarizes the Socialists' present troubles and the increasing resemblance to the last unlaunched SFIO.

It is at this point, near the book's end, that one begins to regret just a little Johnson's refusal to take very seriously the theoretical pronouncements of the protagonists, which he tends to see as a smokescreen covering their true position with electoral success and left-party hegemony. Johnson is little concerned with the pre-history of ideological debate on the French Left and this is a pity: that the *New Left Review* takes something seriously may be a necessary condition for dismissing a sufficient one, but hardly a matter for the matter may well be correct, but seen from within the PC itself the "crisis of the French Communist" which Johnson rightly takes to be the central fact of French political life, is in part at least a matter of high theory, and the understanding it requires acknowledges, to do, what the future prospects for an alternation of power in France really are, one must listen with rather more sympathy to what is being said as well as to what is actually happening. Otherwise, to complete the author's illuminating analysis, we can never hope realistically to assess the chances of seeing the PCP, having gone from red giant to "white dwarf", finally release its throttling mortgage on radical politics in France and become a black hole.

A claim to modesty

By John Lucas

Love goes as the M.G. goes.

The colonel's daughter in black stockings,
Like sash cords, face iced white, studies art.

Goes home once a month. She won't marry the men
She sleeps with, she'll revert to type—it's part

Of the side-show: Mummy and Daddy in the wings,
The bongos fading on the road to Haslemere

Where the inheritors are inheriting still.
("John Marston Advises Anger")

Good, rough, knockabout stuff, but redeemed from journalism only by the sharpness of Porter's eye and phrase-making ability ("sash cords" is exactly right). Even the celebrated sequence "The Sanctified Sonnets" in *The Last of England*, suffers, I think, from never being able to shake entirely free of knowingsness. And the fact that Porter candidly admits to such knowingsness doesn't really help: it's Chinese-boxy. Still, the sonnets have that scrabulous wit which is one of the immediately recognizable features of Porter's writing and which makes him so enjoyable a poet, even when he writes clumsily.

The clumsiness is an odd matter. I am not merely thinking of such journalistic language as "she'll revert to type", though there is rather too much of that in the earlier work; nor of those occasional heaps of words that scrape against each other like jagged-edged flint (again, they occur more often in the early work). More troublingly, there are strange moments when a poem's movement, and its controlling cadences, simply disappear. An example occurs in "Between Two Texts", from *Preaching to the Converted*, where stanzas of adroitly-handled iambic pentameters suddenly collapse at the line "Gesture alarm at premature burial", which has no discoverable rhythm at all. (It should perhaps also be pointed out that "burial" is made to rhyme with "Ariel", and that Porter's rhymes are by no means always the best.) Or there is the stumbling first line of a stanza from "The School for Love":

Meanwhile, a schoolmaster is heard
Praising the egotistic sublime
And I demur. We live, I fear, in time
And death is a big thing and bigger word.

And in the new volume, *English Subtleties*, a poem called "About on the Serchio" begins with the lines "Shelley's unfinished poem must have been written near the mouth of the flat dull stretch to Pisa. You can't get much flatter or duller than that."

These clumsy, awkward or careless moments may be accounted for as the bad side of modesty. They may even look like the provincial's determination not to take the values of the centre seriously, to see art as artificial. Yet this can hardly be so. For one thing, in *Preaching to the Converted* Porter has a vicious pun about those who favour a feelingful artlessness at the expense of art and intelligence: "Why sold about? Blood's running down the sluice/Napalm in the knickers, if I may quote left/We need a new art, with angles all obtuse" ("The Tale of Ink"). For another, many of his poems are unembarrassed about their passionate interest in music and painting; and they include some of his best work. For although Porter is a good satiric poet he is much more besides.

How then to account for these odd flaws? I suspect the truth is that they are simply the price Porter pays for his fertility, his towering inventiveness. And here his being the outsider is a great advantage. He is, after all, the Power the glee given us. His "Story Which Should Have Happened" is the best poem I know about a kind of England that is discoverable in the fiction of Hugh Walpole together to Elizabeth Taylor or William Trevor, and which corresponds to that particular nostalgia for a past which the English still like to press, more English even than themselves: "There should have been the Old Man under creeper/with half a serious lying on a desk/the vague light reaching in to touch the roses... there should have been herb gardens and poppies". Compared with the wit, and insatiable accuracy of detail, in "Story Which Should Have Happened", Donald Davie's much-admired "The Garden Party" is poorly written and weakly observed.

More important, however, is Porter's language. It is truly an international language, quite simply because it isn't like the language of any native English poet and because he can do things with it that no

English poet can. It's dazzlingly eclectic, sometimes almost too much so: as if Christopher Middleton and John Ashbery had agreed to write a pastiche of, say, Huns Magnus Enzensberger. (See, for example, "The Workers" in *The Last of England*, too long to quote here: I suspect that the Hamburger-Middleton anthology of *Modern German Poetry*, which was published in 1962, had a more fruitful effect on Porter than on any other poet who began writing in the 1960s.) Yet what I am attempting to describe is perhaps less a matter of language than of what such language can reveal. It is a habit of mind, an attitude, sometimes and quite properly a pose even, that is extraordinarily generous, accessible and responsive to ideas, to art, and to music, to the things of this world; and it can therefore move at ease among a whole variety of subjects which English poets typically approach, if at all, with awestruck solemnity or rasping contempt. In short, it is utterly civilized. Yet it is quite without the cultic implications which that word customarily takes on. (This no doubt helps to explain why Porter's civility in defining poetry as a modest art should have been so much misunderstood, and should have aroused so much hostility.) This language, this habit of mind, could perhaps be defined as a variety of latter-day Baroque: ebullient, delighting in creativity, and emblematically caught in this stanza from "The Tomb of Senlaurit":

I hate the idea of Spain, yet for
Domenico
I'd round each corner with its urine
smell.
tickle the garden fish with a martyr's
bone,
sit in the shadow of a cancered priest.
So many slaps of black! The old dust
jumps
For American recordings, keyboard
clatters
like cruel dominoes - E major fills the
afternoon.

One could put the matter slightly differently by saying that Porter is a fit successor to Auden who, as I think Porter has himself pointed out, was the first poet to find a language that is both truly of the twentieth century and unrestricted, and whose very comment that "poetry makes nothing happen" has been as much misunderstood as Porter's, and even more abused. *The Last of England* is dedicated to "the decade of the Nineteen Thirties" and poems such as "The Widow's Story" and "Europe: An Ode" make very clear the way in which Porter has learned from Auden that it's possible to have the confidence to see things as a European. He has acquired a vision which is much more assuredly international than that of poets who insist on the need to imitate Charles Williams or "Black Mountain Lyrics".

There are, it has to be said, occasions when this easy, delighted confidence can degenerate into a knowingsness which is merely slick. Several of the "Postcard Poems" from *Preaching to the Converted* are too slight a joke to earn their keep. They are notes about paintings, small enough to fit onto the back of postcard reproductions of the paintings they are about.

As though I've got the collywogs, I look
I've swallowed a Latin Grammar,
you'd never guess the things I can do
with my lips. I'm seventeen and bored
again.

("Domenico Veneziano - Profile Head of a Young Woman - Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin")

This is the kind of jolling one finds in later Auden: it is witty but essentially trivial.

Porter also shares with Auden a gift for generalization, for moral statement. Indeed, there are moments when Porter's gift comes so near to Auden's that you have to rub your eyes to make quite sure that you are not in fact reading Uncle Wizz's own words:

The pity
Of it, that we are misled, by mother,
saying her sadness is the law, by love,
hiding itself in evenings of oblique,
by despair, turning the vag of limbs
to lockjaw.

Yet these lines, which come from "The Delegate", one of the poems from *The Cost of Seriousness*, are in fact utterly secure, and "The Delegate" is a truly marvellous poem. The person who speaks is the dead wife of a poet, and it is worth noting that Porter has been fascinated by the possibilities of dramatic monologue from the outset of his career, and that his convincing ability to inhabit other lives, while it may not prove an ability to "suffer fully all the wrongs of

Man", yet again makes sense of why he should say that poetry is a modest art.

The Cost of Seriousness contains five or six poems that seem certain to last. The same is true of *English Subtleties*. It is a volume of great power and beauty, with all of Porter's gifts on show, and very few of the weaknesses. His ability to deliver memorable statements has never been finer than it is in the new book, nor more telling (though it is typical of him that he should self-deprecatingly refer to himself as a "philosopher of captions"). The poems of *English Subtleties* have extraordinary verve and a quite new eloquence, measured but genuine, in which wit is poised against melancholy in ways that are often expressed though taut, graceful rhythms, as in the comparatively slight poem, "My Old Cat Dances", which ends: "Moving one paw out and yawning, he closes his eyes. Everywhere/people are in despair. And he is dancing."

There is a major group of poems in the volume concerned with the process and experience of ageing. They include "Ocean's Razor", "The Future", "The Story of Jason", "The Garden of Earthly Delights", "What I Have Written I Have Written", "The Imperfection of the World" and "Returning", all of them good, and three poems of quite stunning achievement. One, "The Werther Level", brilliantly evokes Werther, that "pure/cavalier of auto-angst", speaking to the poet who is divided against himself, and shared out among the personal pronouns I, You and He. It is a poem which acknowledges its savouring of melancholy, and in which knowingsness is deployed as intensely serious wit, as it is in "At Lake Masseneucoult", and the wonderful "The Unfortunate Isles", about which the "dictionary of discontinuity" finally remarks

"there stands
the Principality of Childhood reduced
to a crumpled letter, there a rain tank
rusting into canna flowers which mark
the courtliness of love. Nobody weeps
here

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John Lucas

In the direction of chaos

By T. P. Matheson

M. C. BRADBROOK:
John Webster—Citizen and Dramatist
218pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.
0 297 77813 7

JACQUELINE PEARSON:
Tragedy and Tragicomedies in the Plays of John Webster
151pp. Manchester University Press. £12.50.
0 7190 0786 0

T. S. Eliot identified the contradictions inherent in John Webster's four independently-written (as distinct from collaboratively-written) plays on the one hand, "a very great literary and dramatic genius directed toward chaos"; on the other, "a satisfying unity and significance of pattern... springing from the depth and coherence of a number of emotions and feelings, and not only from dramatic and poetic skill". Webster's chaotic chaos is pervasive, not just as a poetic metaphor but in the lives of his characters and in theatrical spectacle. In the two most famous plays, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, all the ceremonies and institutions devised by society for its public order and dignity dissolve into what is represented as their private opposite: marriage dissolves into fornication and sexual disease; law into verbal incoherence and madness; chivalry into squalid and grotesque murder; religion into magic and conjuration; the parody of court into the decay of the Chamber house; even theatre itself becomes a series of tricks, like the masques and dumb-shows which torment and deceive his characters.

M. C. Bradbrook and Jacqueline Pearson seek in their respective studies to resolve these colliding opposites using

radically different methods of investigation; mutually exclusive in some respects, complementary in others. Professor Bradbrook has written about Webster before, notably in her *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (1935; revised in 1980). But for this latest book she is able to draw upon the biographical information first disclosed in the *7LS* by Mary Edmond (December 24, 1976, March 11, 1977, and December 24, 1980). Webster is now firmly identified as the son of a wealthy coach-maker, located in West London in the parish of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate; marrying in haste the pregnant Sara Penell (the sixteen-year-old daughter of a saddler), probably in March 1606; combining the career of playwright with the business of cartwright; admitted to the prosperous Merchant Taylors' Company by patrimony (as earlier his elder brother Edward had been admitted by indenture). His father's premises, at the corner of Cow Lane and Hosier Lane, were within a very short distance of the Fortune and Red Bull theatres, near the new Cockpit or Phoenix theatre, almost within sight and sound of Newgate Prison and St Bartholomew's Hospital.

What the effect of this improved biographical knowledge might be upon our response to and interpretation of Webster's plays is hard to measure. Certainly, in confirming Webster's life and background as citizen and businessman, it could help to explain his bitter cynicism toward aristocratic values, his preoccupation with precise relationships within the hierarchy of Court or Household, the cash nexus which unites his characters in bonds of social, marital and personal contract, and in the rituals of patronage and bribery. This first materialist basis of relationships in his plays is acknowledged by both Bradbrook and Pearson, but is treated as merely the surface rather than the root of things, and is neglected in favour of other concerns. (More disconcerting is to find it similarly neglected in L. C. Knight's *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*, where Webster is relegated to only five fleeting allusions).

Webster the citizen does not inspire Professor Bradbrook to economic reflection. Instead, she attempts what is described as the "display" method, appropriate to the author of a triumphal city pageant, reconstructing Webster's world ("the context, not the content of his tragedies") by juxtaposing the lives of notable fellow parishioners with incidents, characters and attitudes from the plays. This produces an invigorating series of "perspectives" on the splendours and miseries of St Sepulchre (its bell tolling for every execution), but the results of the display, while vivid and suggestive, are difficult to verify or assess. After indirectly illuminating Webster's education and training via the biographies of Richard Mulcaster at Merchant Taylors' School and John Davies at the Middle Temple, Bradbrook explores possible local and contemporary analogues in life for the tragic victims (principally the Duchess) of Webster's plays. As she dramatically puts it: "all the passions of Renaissance Italy were to be found on his doorstep".

Next door to the Websters' coachyard lived Penelope, Lady Rich, sister of the Earl of Essex, Sidney's Stella, an unwilling wife for twenty-four years, who bore her lover, Essex's friend and rival Charles Blount, no less than five children. As Essex's fortunes declined in treason and death, Blount's (and Penelope's) seemed to rise. Blount was made a Councillor to King James, Penelope a Lady of the Bedchamber (fifth in precedence). The lovers lived openly together until, after Rich had obtained a consistory divorce, they entered into a secret marriage, perhaps to guarantee the inheritance of their children. James forbade them the Court. Secret marriage, secret procreation, royal disfavour, the coincidence of an impetuous, doomed brother—these do suggest the spirit if not the fact of *The Duchess of Malfi*. But the nub of the play's marriage, to a social inferior, is missing as is any kind of substantive, demonstrable association.

Another ghostly model may be the Princess of Eboli, patroness and supposed mistress of Antonio Perez, the King of Spain's

hounded and exiled double-agent (who at one time maintained his household at Essex House in the Strand). For her association, Eboli was confined until death in a darkened, barred room; her estates were confiscated; guardianship of her children was withdrawn. Her resilience under imprisonment is revealed by her quoted defiant retort: "I love Antonio Perez's axe better than the King's face". The contingent circumstances—arbitrary imprisonment, ecclesiastical persecution, espionage, a view of the world as an impenetrable labyrinth—again suggest the Duchess, although Eboli's frustrated attempt to find refuge in a Carmelite monastery might also echo Vittoria's fate.

M. C. Bradbrook writes robustly and speculatively out of a rich knowledge of the period, although it is doubtful whether the demonstration that Webster probably exploited local as well as Italian colour is of practical help in understanding the "inner logic" of the plays themselves.

Jacqueline Pearson confines most of her analysis to art rather than life, treating the plays as virtually self-contained, self-defining literary and dramatic artefacts, which manipulate conventions of form and content within the putative genre of Jacobean tragicomedies. She argues that an obsessive consciousness of the "clashing extremes" of life provokes experiments in dramatic structure and tone which will embody significant contrasts and discontinuities. Thus, tragicomedies is variously exemplified in plays which mix kings and clowns; join myth with care; avert the danger of death; insist on the fictional nature of what is happening; offer a diversity of reactions to the same episode; exploit schematic antitheses (in both language and stage effects); dramatize "clashing tones" of laughter and tears. These "clashing tones" are central to her interpretation, to be seen in Webster's introduction of laughter at serious moments, his discontinuous characterization, his ambivalence of attitude toward his own rhetoric, the establishment of distinctive play-audience relationships and the

use of a mediating conclusion (in the terms defined in Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*). The implication is that only a "mixed" genre can express the whole truth, and that ironic repetition (as in the case of the Duchess) is its chief instrument.

Dr Pearson presents her thesis with care and caution, marshalling evidence from an extensive range of contemporary plays, although with few European examples. The necessary weight to *The Devil's Lane* and *A Cure for a Cuckold* as well as to the major tragedies. One common objection is to such a broad definition of tragicomedies, which will inevitably adjust to explain almost any kind of dramatic discontinuity in the interest of a higher synthesis. Pearson seems aware of the risk of rationalization in this and therefore reasonably relies as much on the exposition of minute particulars as on the report of general principle in proposing (in the face of considerable additional authority) the unity and coherence of language, character, structure and spectacle in Webster's plays.

The argument that Webster sets up a special relationship between play and audience requires two kinds of supplementation: more theoretical attention to the effect on criticism of the alternative aesthetics of performance and text; and more consideration of actual modern performances of Webster's plays, an element of stage history. In the same context, Pearson's recurrent motif of simultaneous laughter and tears as a condition of Jacobean tragicomedies (exemplified in Macdonald's *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, where one page writes to see the other laugh and the other laughs to see the first weep), almost finds its modern counterpart in the formulation of Brecht's *Epic Theatre*: "That's great art: there's nothing obvious in it. I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh." The difference is that Webster, detachment in the face of tragedy belongs to the character; in Brecht such alienation is a function of the spectacle.

PHILOSOPHY

BRUCE A. ACKERMAN:
Social Justice in the Liberal State
392pp. Yale University Press. \$17.50.
0 300 02439 8

This book is clearly in the tradition of John Rawls and Robert Nozick. Much of the discussion concerns a group of pioneers who are about to colonize a new planet, and science-fiction devices are used freely to set up the idealized situation for which social justice is initially described (though we move later towards really and second-best solutions). All material resources consist of a single infinitely alterable substance called "manna", and the (female) Commander is provided with only with ray-guns but with a "perfect technology of justice" with which to enforce whatever distributions, etc. are chosen as just: there is also a Master Geneticist equipped with germ-bombs, and a Master Designer who makes "transmitter-shields" that facilitate or block communication.

Throughout most of the book Bruce Ackerman takes liberalism in some sense to be granted. His problem is how to define the liberalism, and his main thesis is that he has found a better way of doing this than is yielded by either utilitarian or social contract approaches. But at the end he makes some suggestions about how this view may be supported against explicitly non-liberal political philosophies.

He has, indeed, an interesting new idea, that liberalism is to be defined in terms of *constrained dialogue*. He sees the basic problem as a natural and inevitable struggle for "power", under which head-ling Ackerman includes all competition for scarce resources. He identifies the liberal solution as that which can be defended in dialogue, in conversation, between the competitors, subject to the three constraints of rationality, consistency, and neutrality.

Rationality requires that any claim to "power" must be defended by the claimant giving a reason why he is more entitled to the resource than the questioner. But this reason cannot be an assumed antecedent right: any rights must emerge from the dialogue itself. Consistency is the rule that the reason advanced by a power-holder on one occasion must not be inconsistent with the reasons by which he defends other claims. The third and most important constraint, neutrality, says that "No reason is a good reason if it requires the power holder to assert: (a) that his conception of the good is better than that asserted by any of his fellow citizens; or (b) that, regarding his conception of the good, he is intrinsically superior to one or more of his fellow citizens".

How does this differ from, for example, a utilitarian view, which also gives equal weight to everyone's interests? To answer this question, and to see what force this proposal has, let us examine some of Ackerman's applications of his method. One of these concerns the distribution of resources in the "paleo simplified initial situation of the colonists (all adult and healthy), landing on an uninhabited planet. Ackerman argues that only an equal distribution of manna can be defended subject to his constraints, unless one or more individuals voluntarily ask for less than an equal share; but a voluntary request favours an unequal distribution if it yields greater utility. Ackerman thus equalizes weight to persons, whereas utilitarianism gives equal weight to equal satisfactions. His argument is that the utilitarian's "utility" is to be identified with the satisfaction of a happy individual, but the particular conception of the good is not shared, and so cannot be weighed in neutral dialogue. It would be wrong to say that Ackerman's method is easy to dismiss the utilitarian's that identifies utility with the fulfillment of purposes. Though Ackerman does not dispute this, he might well object that it is individuals whose claims are to be weighed neutrally, not purposes. But his method is not an additional rule, but a way of looking at the utilitarian's method. The fulfillment of purposes is not a special conception of the good, but the general form of any such conception.

Ackerman's new method, whether it is to be distributed as to let each individual have his share, or to let the same

degree. But his arguments against this are unsound. He says that if such a consideration yields an unequal distribution, anyone who gets less than another can protest: "So the only thing that prevents me from getting the manna is the character of my ideals". Though this is literally true, it does not mean that part (a) of the neutrality constraint is violated. Though one claimant gets less because of what his ideals or his conception of the good are they (or his conception of the good) are being held to be inferior. Ackerman is here guilty of a blatant fallacy in the use of his own constraints.

His procedure is question-begging in another way. Even if we agreed (though we have not been forced to) that if the manna is to be divided among the colonists, it must be divided equally, someone might ask why it should be divided at all, rather than kept together as a collective resource, particularly if this would fulfill the totality of purposes better. This is obviously an untidy solution. But we can see why Ackerman is forced into such shifts. The dialogue he allows is extremely thin, constantly coming back to "I am at least as good as you are". If each claimant is as good as another, then like claims must be met equally. But what about diverse conflicting claims, such as the claim of a legitimate owner to do what he likes with his possessions—or, indeed, his energy—and the claim of all members of the next generation to a level of such resources as Ackerman does. If we thought first of joint ownership of all resources (as Locke, for example did), and saw its continuance as maximally efficient (as Locke did not), we might complain that those who demand their separate shares are, for the sake of their particular conception of the good, diminishing the value of other people's shares.

Another question which agitates moralists concerns the range of those whose claims or interests are to be taken into account. Do they include unborn babies, non-human animals, actual or possible members of future generations? Here Ackerman thinks that his method yields clear-cut answers. All and only those who can eventually enter into the dialogue can make claims. With a few possible exceptions, non-human animals are not in the game, for as yet they are not self-aware, or at least not self-aware enough to make claims. But actual future people are in, and perhaps talking apes and Martians who can learn English. These are indeed answers, but are they the answers we want? If they do result from the stated constraints on dialogue, does this not merely show how arbitrary those constraints are? If someone objected that Ackerman's citizens, in denying rights to the various excluded creatures, are in effect claiming that they are superior to those who are excluded, he would not doubt reply that rationality is so defined that the questioner himself is not then some other creature on whose behalf a questioner speaks. But why should rationality have been defined in just this way?

A moral and political problem of the future is genetic engineering. Ackerman considers a parent who has deliberately chosen to produce "a brown-eyed girl who is relatively good at chemistry but relatively weak on aesthetic sensibility". Having reached the age of twenty, the daughter, though good at chemistry, hates and would prefer to be an artist. She complains: "When you approached the Geneticist, you ordered him to make me good at chemistry and bad at art. What gave you the right to use my power over me in this way?" Ackerman thinks that

Ackerman is against inherited wealth, and against parents being allowed to do almost anything to give their children a specially good start in life. As far as possible, all young adults are to start level. But there are two exceptions. If parents actually like their children, and are not merely responding to the parent-child relationship as such, they may do things for them, just as they are free to do things for other people, though what they do had better not take the form of "large material gifts". Also if an adult has accumulated possessions which he has no obligation to pass on to anyone—they are surplus to the requirements of basic fairness between generations—he may bargain with those of the next generation whom he does not favour, so that if they receive smaller gifts from him they will not protest if he gives much more to his favoured offspring.

Does justice then depend more on hard bargaining than on neutral dialogue? This is obviously an untidy solution. But we can see why Ackerman is forced into such shifts. The dialogue he allows is extremely thin, constantly coming back to "I am at least as good as you are". If each claimant is as good as another, then like claims must be met equally. But what about diverse conflicting claims, such as the claim of a legitimate owner to do what he likes with his possessions—or, indeed, his energy—and the claim of all members of the next generation to a level of such resources as Ackerman does. If we thought first of joint ownership of all resources (as Locke, for example did), and saw its continuance as maximally efficient (as Locke did not), we might complain that those who demand their separate shares are, for the sake of their particular conception of the good, diminishing the value of other people's shares.

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the parent has no reply, and therefore that "the Commander must rule parental design off the agenda of a liberal Assembly's deliberation", whereas a genetic lottery is in order. But in fact the parent has a perfectly sound reply: "My dear girl, no power on earth could have made you good at art. The power I exercised was to allow you, with your inborn strengths and weaknesses, to come into existence, rather than, say, some different person who would have been good at art. If I had chosen otherwise, it wouldn't have done you any good: you would not be here." So Ackerman has again misheard his own method. There may well be reasons for banning genetic manipulation, but this daughter's protest is not one of them.

A problem about which Ackerman admits uncertainty is that of a character he calls "Shifty". At the age of twenty, Shifty is an ascetic, but, knowing that the age of forty he is likely to become a libertine, he makes contractual arrangements to try to prevent this. Are these contracts binding, and should they be enforced? Neutral dialogue yields no clear answer, but Ackerman thinks this is better than "the simplistic certainty with which a contract theorist would analyze Shifty's problem". This is unfair to contract theorists, who have often held, for example, that a contract by which one sells oneself into slavery is invalid. Nor are there "emphatic certainties about the self and time implicit in the contractarian's position". Moral doubts about personal identity over long periods of time are available to the contractarian, as to anyone else, and would have a profound effect on this approach, suggesting that a contractually legitimate society would be one in which its citizens *continue* to opt into. But this was already suggested in Locke's version of the social contract, and it could easily be read into other versions. Ackerman seems to take no contract theory except that of Rawls very seriously, and even in Rawls he focuses on the initial hypothetical contract behind the veil of ignorance, whereas something more like a continuing contract in the full light of day may be discerned in Rawls's account of the well-ordered society. This is one of a number of respects in which Ackerman has made his task easy by oversimplifying his rival views.

Shifty's problem suggests that of a better known and perhaps comiser character, the Prodigal Son, Ackerman constantly suggests that distributive justice is satisfied if each young adult starts with an equal share of the material resources, and "Each citizen can freely exchange his initial entitlements within a flexible transactional network". But if the prodigal collects his share, squanders it, and becomes destitute, has he no further claim on society? If it is doubtful whether the twenty-year-old ascetic can bind his forty-year-old libertine self, should it not be also doubtful whether the twenty-year-old prodigal should be able to condemn his forty-year-old sadder and wiser self to permanent penury? But Ackerman shows no awareness of this sort of problem.

As a whole, then, this book is disappointing. It has a promising central idea, and it raises important issues. But much of the argument is thin, and some is fallacious. Anyone who remembers the classics of political philosophy will regret the style. We learn, for example, that "It is the long-run run that is relevant to a practical assessment of trusteeship competence", that liberal theory makes people pierce their substantive disagreements and achieve a deeper unity—i.e. the fact that they are all seeking to define themselves through a common process of dialogue, and we encounter "the conceptual task of providing a Neutral order to the struggle for power" and "ongoing good-faith disagreement". Indeed, the author's favourite words are "ongoing" and "dialogue"—a substitute for the standard English "dialectical". The text is also disfigured by many grammatical and other errors that are a disgrace to a university press: "If a social world fulfilled the excremental wax that dogs my ears, I shall say..." (p. 28); "I shall say for you and..." (p. 34); "Nor is it enough to criticize..." to show..." (p. 67); "wasting a flag" (p. 73); this is not a joke; "his former wife, who he now hates" (p. 84); "fulfilled his burden" (p. 120); "Just because..." didn't mean..." (p. 210); "work about the player" (p. 361); meaning "walk".

Ackerman refers to his next book, with a hint that it will deal with liberal constitutional theory. It is to be hoped that it will not simply take as its foundation the principles that are supposedly established in this one, but will reconsider them: in particular, would it not be better to sacrifice the illusion of getting positive results from minimal assumptions, and assert explicitly some basic rights with which citizens could deal as entering into a debate, not negotiation. This would be a more coherent, if less flamboyant, theory.

Matt Simpson

Literature in brief

GERALD HAMMOND:
The Reader and Shakespeare's Young Men
Summers
247pp. Macmillan. £12.
0 333 28811 3

Big-fish have little seas upon their back to bite 'em; and commentators have commentaries, and so ad infinitum. This book rides confidently on the back of Stephen Booth's voluminous commentary on Shakespeare's Sonnets (Yale 1977), adding little to it except the vaguish conception of "the reader". Gerald Hammond is concerned with what goes on between this person and various layers of meaning in Sonnets 1-126, most often, a "subtext" rather than the primary sense.

"The book is not without sensitivity and judgment," Mr Hammond takes Thorpe's text as containing "enough defensible groupings" to justify keeping the 1609 dates, and the decision to treat 126 (not a sonnet, as the conclusion to the "young man" sequence, unified overall by the judgment of many readers. But the judgment of scholars really want to comment on the Sonnets, especially when it is neither informed nor correct. Hammond approaches the Sonnets in a deliberately non-scholarly way, claiming that readers can develop satisfactory modes of reading "without their having to relate the poem to the entire culture in which it was written". Unfortunately, qualified analyses of individual words and phrases are unlikely to be satisfactory without some scholarly framework. Simple consultation of the OED would have delivered Mr Hammond from most blunders in describing the phrase "better than I" for "Stones" as "modern". It was first used in this sense by Sidney in his revised *Arcadia*, and has been in continuous use since 1584.

KATHERINE DUNCAN-JONES:
END L. DUTCH:
The Themes of Elizabethan English
217pp. Macmillan. £12.
0 233 27831 8

End L. Dutch is concerned to treat Elizabethan English as a whole rather than as heretofore tended to be the

case, through individual works. After an admirable biographical sketch she devotes seven chapters to the examination of individual themes of Gascoigne's novels, novellas and short stories: the natural scene, the social scene, the industrial scene, the family, the individual, mystery and the macabre, and religion.

She shows the consistency, despite the variety of forms and subjects chosen, in Gascoigne's treatment of these themes, even in her most disparate works: the use of an Arcadian country setting (like Poussin's Arcadia) to incorporate death as a place of spiritual refreshment and a source of moral strength; her seriousness and sensitivity in handling the social nuances which play so important a part in the lives of her characters; and her presentation of a strong family background however limited its numbers, as a source of moral strength; her concern for the difficult necessity of reconciling individual dignity and autonomy with the primacy of social and religious duty; and finally the overwhelming loving religious conviction, while being aware of the danger inherent in a religion based on constraint and fear.

Dr Dutch also examines Gascoigne's narrative method, showing the way in which his precise presentation of details provides some of his most powerful moments, although the final chapter, in which she confronts many of them, seems a little swathed but her sympathetic and well-written reconsideration of the works makes this an important and stimulating study, and one which should serve, rightly, to raise further Mrs Gascoigne's literary status.

JEAN WILSON:
ROBERT M. POLHEMUS:
Comic Poet
The Great Tradition from Austen to Joyce
399pp. University of Chicago Press. £15.
0 226 67320 0

Robert Polhemus's *Comic Poet* aims to do three things: to analyse comic novels from *Don Quixote* to *Watergate*; to trace the links between "comic" and "serious" and religious concerns; and to show that comedy itself represents a kind of religious consciousness.

It succeeds, best at its first task. When scrutinizing individual novels, Robert Polhemus can be exhilaratingly perceptive; and his book is full of thought-provoking paragraphs such as the brief, idea-packed account of Meredith's style and what it signifies. Over-ingenuity is a constant danger, though. Leaping excitedly from one association to the next, his readings can leave readers gasping far behind: as when he claims the Gnat in *Through the Looking-Glass* as a reminder of Psalm 67 "in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice"; and an embodiment of Carroll's awareness that he is "an inverted creature whose passion and inner drives are symbolized by the word insect, serving as a cover for the word 'insect'".

The book's religious thesis tries hard to combine its various concerns, but is taped together with imagery rather than soundly secured by argument. Polhemus' "symbolized Meredith in the communion of comedy", Alpo is "like a child, a source of fear, a source of joy, a source of terror, a source of intelligence, however, keeps breaking through this pseudo-mysticism. By so appreciatively bringing out the rich diversity of English comic fiction, he redemptively sabotages the synthetic uniformity of his thesis.

PETER KEMP:
RICHARD CRONIN:
Shelley's Poetic Thought
283pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 233 30009 2

Richard Cronin groups previous Shelley criticism into three broad categories: first, that which attempts to find a coherent view of Shelley as a thinker; second, that which sees Shelley as a great symbolist and myth-maker; and third, that which explores biographical relations between Shelley's life and his self-image in his poetry. His own approach is more linguistic and historical than that of any of the critics in these three groups. He takes as his starting point Coleridge's distinction between "poetic thought" and "thought" translated into the language of poetry, and discusses this in relation to older, eighteenth-century views of language. (He is particularly good on Wordsworth.) He then

offers a detailed reading of all Shelley's major poetry, and shows that the ideas of the poems are inseparable from the language in which they are framed. He also makes helpful historical allusions and comparisons, so that for instance, *Adonais* is not merely explored in terms of prosody and poetic mechanics but related interestingly to traditions of elegy going back to Spenser; and to eighteenth-century neoclassical memorials, such as Canova's monument to Maria Christina.

Mr Cronin's reading of the *Ode to the West Wind* is full of common sense, and the book as a whole is written in an incisive comprehensible style. It would be safe to put it into the hands of an undergraduate starved of conversation about Shelley.

A.N. WILSON:
RUPERT HART-DAVIS (Editor):
The Lyttelton Hart-Davis Letters
Volume 3, 1958.
185pp. John Murray. £12.50.
0 7195 3770 3

1958 sees our two correspondents well entrenched in their hebdomadal habits, indulging themselves (in Burke's words used as an epigraph) "in the freedom of epistolary intercourse... with very little attention to formal method". George Lyttelton is busy in his rural retirement, marking GCE papers and governing local schools, and finding time for some solid and systematic re-reading. *The Dynamics* for example, (which reveals a literary sensibility that used to rectify *Parnassus*), is a chorus when pumping out a flood of letters, and immediately brought to mind "offering unneeded arms" performing dull faces of reason" (from Clough's *Bohemia*) when being related to his feet after a fall on an icy pavement in Ipswich.

Rupert Hart-Davis is as busy as ever, much of his publishing time during the year being taken up with his aunt Lady Diana Cooper's *Memoirs*. His energy continues to diminish—the imminent debut of *Time and Tide* may bring to an end his "yearly" crime-fiction reviews, but he will still be able to put in some work on the *Wit* letters, a task setting up

when the press of business allows. For his extensive reading is something to be looked forward to. "I should love a year's solid reading," he writes, "partly planned and partly wayward. I keep taking down unread books from my own shelves, reading a chapter or two with immense pleasure, and then having to put them back in it. I have some internal author's typewriter." His beloved *Symposium* provides the only opportunity for prolonged study, where he had the assistance of a lady companion about whom—after some previous minor prevarication—he gives his friend some "private and revealing" information, frankly but sensitively conveyed.

The correspondents have the dissent of the Literary Society as an opportunity for meeting each other, their fellow-members included. T. S. Eliot, "a bit of natural, humorous and unpretentious" and "Flash Harry" (Sir Malcolm Sargent), whose charms were more obvious but more debatable. In their letters, they are united in taste, though their preferences are so mutually obvious that there is a grumbling about the usual bugbear "Your Duff is clearly marked out for a lifetime". Lyttelton writes about his friend's elder son: "Don't let him call like Amia, Leavis, Hovis or anyone called Wilson". Much more interesting than these old scores are new discoveries, such as Rupert Hart-Davis's first visit to Stephen Spender, for whom he was soon to take yet another literary exorcism.

The *Etonian* and *Cricket* columns have, as the editor remarks, been much reduced for this volume. But enough has been left to convey a flavour of the correspondents' special interests. When the London Library ruling appeal got before a Tribunal, counsel asked the Chairman to give his evidence before the President's "hoping that I might be able to knock the shine off the ball before Eliot came in". And Lyttelton recalls Wilfred Rhodes' rebuke to a Harrow boy who had protested that a "prohibited-out" was "greater harm" than "Cricket's not meant to be a foot". Wykehamists, over-come to school and burnt out by thirty, come to a friend. Eliot's disdains are Eton matter, friend of Lyttelton's is a schoolmaster, a friend, matter-of-fact scientist but, not being a Wykehamist, had plenty of humor and could laugh even at himself.

ALAN BELL:
The Ghost of my Mother

The Ghost of my Mother

What of her history when all the traces of him — his hairs brushed in the noon, the excremental wax that dogs my ears, a moody sea at work in the veins? Her death alone was memorable: a blood-burst in the mouth. She was his victim — much as I still curling round his blistering throat that beat her down. What of her when I revamp his fatrumina, his sudden shamefaced loneliness that buys back love with promises, embittered dreams of something good? Ghosts are rarely charitable. And now she nudges him, with frightened, loving eyes.

Matt Simpson

Competitors in conversation

By J. L. Mackie

BRUCE A. ACKERMAN:
Social Justice in the Liberal State
392pp. Yale University Press. \$17.50.
0 300 02439 8

This book is clearly in the tradition of John Rawls and Robert Nozick. Much of the discussion concerns a group of pioneers who are about to colonize a new planet, and science-fiction devices are used freely to set up the idealized situation for which social justice is initially described (though we move later towards really and second-best solutions). All material resources consist of a single infinitely alterable substance called "manna", and the (female) Commander is provided with only with ray-guns but with a "perfect technology of justice" with which to enforce whatever distributions, etc. are chosen as just: there is also a Master Geneticist equipped with germ-bombs, and a Master Designer who makes "transmitter-shields" that facilitate or block communication.

Throughout most of the book Bruce Ackerman takes liberalism in some sense to be granted. His problem is how to define the liberalism, and his main thesis is that he has found a better way of doing this than is yielded by either utilitarian or social contract approaches. But at the end he makes some suggestions about how this view may be supported against explicitly non-liberal political philosophies.

He has, indeed, an interesting new idea, that liberalism is to be defined in terms of *constrained dialogue*. He sees the basic problem as a natural and inevitable struggle for "power", under which head-ling Ackerman includes all competition for scarce resources. He identifies the liberal solution as that which can be defended in dialogue, in conversation, between the competitors, subject to the three constraints of rationality, consistency, and neutrality.

Rationality requires that any claim to "power" must be defended by the claimant giving a reason why he is more entitled to the resource than the questioner. But this reason cannot be an assumed antecedent right: any rights must emerge from the dialogue itself. Consistency is the rule that the reason advanced by a power-holder on one occasion must not be inconsistent with the reasons by which he defends other claims. The third and most important constraint, neutrality, says that "No reason is a good reason if it requires the power holder to assert: (a) that his conception of the good is better than that asserted by any of his fellow citizens; or (b) that, regarding his conception of the good, he is intrinsically superior to one or more of his fellow citizens".

How does this differ from, for example, a utilitarian view, which also gives equal weight to everyone's interests? To answer this question, and to see what force this proposal has, let us examine some of Ackerman's applications of his method. One of these concerns the distribution of resources in the "paleo simplified initial situation of the colonists (all adult and healthy), landing on an uninhabited planet. Ackerman argues that only an equal distribution of manna can be defended subject to his constraints, unless one or more individuals voluntarily ask for less than an equal share; but a voluntary request favours an unequal distribution if it yields greater utility. Ackerman thus equalizes weight to persons, whereas utilitarianism gives equal weight to equal satisfactions. His argument is that the utilitarian's "utility" is to be identified with the satisfaction of a happy individual, but the particular conception of the good is not shared, and so cannot be weighed in neutral dialogue. It would be wrong to say that Ackerman's method is easy to dismiss the utilitarian's that identifies utility with the fulfillment of purposes. Though Ackerman does not dispute this, he might well object that it is individuals whose claims are to be weighed neutrally, not purposes. But his method is not an additional rule, but a way of looking at the utilitarian's method. The fulfillment of purposes is not a special conception of the good, but the general form of any such conception.

Ackerman's new method, whether it is to be distributed as to let each individual have his share, or to let the same

degree. But his arguments against this are unsound. He says that if such a consideration yields an unequal distribution, anyone who gets less than another can protest: "So the only thing that prevents me from getting the manna is the character of my ideals". Though this is literally true, it does not mean that part (a) of the neutrality constraint is violated. Though one claimant gets less because of what his ideals or his conception of the good are they (or his conception of the good) are being held to be inferior. Ackerman is here guilty of a blatant fallacy in the use of his own constraints.

His procedure is question-begging in another way. Even if we agreed (though we have not been forced to) that if the manna is to be divided among the colonists, it must be divided equally, someone might ask why it should be divided at all, rather than kept together as a collective resource, particularly if this would fulfill the totality of purposes better. This is obviously an untidy solution. But we can see why Ackerman is forced into such shifts. The dialogue he allows is extremely thin, constantly coming back to "I am at least as good as you are". If each claimant is as good as another, then like claims must be met equally. But what about diverse conflicting claims, such as the claim of a legitimate owner to do what he likes with his possessions—or, indeed, his energy—and the claim of all members of the next generation to a level of such resources as Ackerman does. If we thought first of joint ownership of all resources (as Locke, for example did), and saw its continuance as maximally efficient (as Locke did not), we might complain that those who demand their separate shares are, for the sake of their particular conception of the good, diminishing the value of other people's shares.

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A sufficient nationalism

By Vivian Mercier

PATRICK RAFFOLDI:
Irish Literature in English:
The Romantic Period (1789-1850)
Volume 1, Part 1, 2 and 3, 364pp.
Volume 2, Part 4, 392pp.
Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe.
£52.50 the set.
0 901072 40 0

Patrick Raffoldi, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lille, has done more to foster Irish studies in general and the study of Anglo-Irish literature in particular than any other living Frenchman. He is also expert in, among other things, English Romantic poetry. I wonder, though, how well he knows his Balzac: he seems to have forgotten the passage in *Illusions perdues* where Lousteau asks Lucien de Rubempré, "Are you a Classic or a Romantic?" and goes on to explain the literary politics of the Bourbon Restoration.

The Royalists are Romanticists, the Liberals are Classicists... By no odd freak, the Romantic Royalists demand literary liberty and the repeal of the laws... whereas the Liberals want to preserve the *Unités*, classical rhetoric, and the strictly movement of the *alexandrin*. It follows then that in each camp the literary beliefs are out of keeping with the political ones.

Unmindful of this paradox and despite a caveat or two of his own, Professor Raffoldi all too often equates Irish nationalism (preferably Catholic) with Romanticism, and Irish conservatism (preferably Protestant) with Neo-Classicism: he thus has difficulty explaining why *Melmoth the Wanderer*, perhaps the most unequivocally Romantic novel written in Ireland, was the work of a Church of Ireland clergyman with Evangelical leanings, author of *Five Sermons on the Errors of the Roman Catholic Church*. Most of the Reverend C. R. Maturin's Evangelical colleagues mistrusted or despised novels except as channels for their own propaganda, like those of the Reverend George Brittain; while Professor Raffoldi has read *par ses pichés*. Yet clergymen of Anglo-Irish intellects of Romantic fervour, which they poured out in their sermons and in hymns that are still cherished. Unfortunately, two of the

hymn-writers, Reverends Thomas Kelly and John Walker, strayed from the Anglican fold to found ephemeral sects, popularly known as the Walkrites and the Kellys; if I may be permitted an Irish ball, the Plymouth Brethren were also founded in Dublin, so that Professor Raffoldi's remark about the "coldness" of Protestant "religious attitudes" requires modification, at least in regard to the period 1789-1850.

Although its English title suggests that *Irish Literature in English: The Romantic Period (1789-1850)* is a literary history, it is not a long, stimulating essay in comparative literature, with a decidedly French orientation, first published in French under the more appropriate title *L'Irlande et le Romantisme* (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1972). Professor Raffoldi has not revised his original text, which has been translated by Lucilla Watson and Margaret Stanley Vaughan of Ottawa University; they have made few serious errors; the worst implies that the Battle of Camperdown took place on land, Irish land! Calling a Catholic priest's house "the manse" is merely amusing. The essay fills the first volume of the English edition, while the second contains the "Reference Section" - that extraordinarily valuable feature of the French original, which I, and no doubt many others, have pored over and pillaged since 1972. It consists of four parts: a general bibliography; bio-bibliographies of some 235 Irish authors; a list of the principal French translations of their works; and a very useful list of the principal Irish periodicals of the time. At least nine of the bibliographies of major authors have been updated by experts, mainly former pupils of Professor Raffoldi who have already made significant contributions to Anglo-Irish studies. My only criticism is that the bibliography could have been condensed into half the space by using a less extravagant format than the French one, thus substantially reducing the price of the work.

Professor Raffoldi's *comparatist* approach is most evident in the first and third parts of his three-part essay. Part I, "Prelude to Romanticism", mentions the impact on Anglo-Irish intellectuals of Rousseau and the French Revolution, Goethe, Schiller, Kotzebue, Lamartine, Hugo, Vigny, and of course the English Romantic poets. To Professor Raffoldi's

humorous dismay, Béranger was a favourite of the Reverend Francis Mahony ("Father Proust"), but such misvaluations are a constant hazard in inter-cultural traffic: for example, the French cult of Poe's poetry, especially "The Raven". When they come to Part III, "The Impact of Irish Romanticism", Irish readers are going to feel a like dismay: not so much at the French enthusiasm for Tom Moore and *Melmoth* and Maria Edgeworth, as at the similar craze for Lady Morgan and the forgotten Mrs (Regina Maria Dalton) Roche; until I read Raffoldi, I thought Mrs Roche's *Children of the Abbey* was a translation from the French - at least one English edition, perhaps the one my mother owned, in fact was. It is gratifying, however, to find that more novels by John and Michael Banim appeared in French than the average Anglo-Irish specialist can remember the names of. Professor Raffoldi speculates that Irish humour either baffled or disgusted the translators, so that Lover and Lever are virtually ignored, and William Carleton too, though with less reason. It is possible, though, that Carleton's exclusive Dublin publication prior to 1847 explains this neglect: he first appears in French in 1845. As for the total oblivion that is James Clarence Mangan's fate in France, that can only be made comprehensible by his lack of a London publisher or magazine editor: otherwise a poet so closely resembling Poe would have swept through Paris like wildfire.

Part II, "Nationalist Romanticism", is of course the heart of Professor Raffoldi's essay; I have already indicated what an intellectual minefield it traverses, but he is more often right than wrong. After chapter neatly summarizing the political events of 1782-1850 in Ireland, he turns to "The Romanticism [Romanticizing] of the Nation's Present" - showing, for example, the difference in feeling between an Edgeworth landscape passage and the description of a similar scene by Lady Morgan; he also contrasts the two ladies' attitudes to characters drawn from the old Catholic aristocracy. He deplores much of Lady Morgan's work, but clearly she belongs to the nineteenth century, while Miss Edgeworth is a survivor from the eighteenth, in discussing the United Irishmen, who tried to transplant the French Revolution to Ireland, Professor Raffoldi concedes that "nationalism does not yet suffice" to wear Robert Emmet "from a traditional [verse] style with its

love of parallels or antitheses", but he fails to see an almost equal rigidity in William Drennan's "The Wake of William Orr". Even Moore, in the full flow of his sympathy for the dead Emmet and his bereaved fiancée, Sarah Curran, cannot resist a too-keen antithesis: "He had lived for his love, for his country he died...". On the other hand, the first Viscount Charleville, one of those rewarded for his part in passing the Act of Union which quenched the United Irishmen's hopes, built himself a battlemented castle "to exhibit specimens of Gothic architecture, as collected from Cathedrals and Chapel-tombs, and to show how they may be applied to Chimney Poles, Ceilings, windows, balustrades, etc.". The antiquarian element in Romanticism found a warm spot in Tory hearts, as the example of Walter Scott reminds us. In his generally impeccable chapter "The Rediscovery of the Past, the Irish Mode", Professor Raffoldi misses some nuances, such as the fact that the Irish Archaeological Society was founded in 1840 by a Tory High Churchman, Reverend James Henthorn Todd. He recognizes the importance of Carleton's knowledge of Irish, but is not aware that Eugene O'Curry was convinced of Gerald Griffin's literacy in that language by the completeness of the version of "The Children of Lir" given in *Tales of the Jury-Room*. Professor Raffoldi rightly stresses the revival of Irish music and the effect that writing to Irish tunes had upon the verification of Moore, helping to create what Thomas MacDonagh, the 1916 leader, christened "The Irish Mode".

Perhaps the Irish past would never have been brought to life for readers of English if Romanticism had not developed when and how it did. Macpherson's *Ossian* was a Neo-Classical conception of what "primitive" poetry ought to be like - he later made a prose translation of the *Iliad* - but indolent Romantics went wild over it; Irishmen suddenly realized the value, in cash as well as culture, of their Celtic heritage. Professor Raffoldi quotes the naïve but heartfelt words of Thomas Furlong, a bad poet: "Irish literature is no longer fashionable; the demand increases, and the supply is certain". Furlong was one of the versifiers who misinterpreted the fine Irish texts in James Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy* (1831) by dressing up literal translations supplied to them by Hardiman. A young Tory, Samuel Ferguson, accused them of being "actuated by a morbid desire, neither healthy nor honest,

to elevate the tone of the original... his enormous four-part review of these translations of nearly thirty poems; better still he added an appendix containing twenty beautiful, simple, almost literal, word-for-word translations, some of which instantly became Anglo-Irish classics. Born in 1818, Ferguson belonged to a younger generation than Hardiman's, poetsasters and never wrote such good poetry again, but the Irish equivalent of the first performance of Victor Hugo's *Hernani*, but marking a Romantic watershed.

In his final chapter Professor Raffoldi passes judgement on Irish Romanticism, reproving it severely for its lack of historicism, its special pleading, artistic licence, and a lack of professionalising generally. Mangan he regards as the greatest poet: "About a quarter of Mangan's total poetic output may be safely compared to Coleridge's slender production verse. But how can one forget the remainder with its verbiage, its redundancies, padding and the verbal acrobatics...". Moore and Ferguson and, among the novelists, Carleton and Le Fanu, are also unjustly neglected, he thinks. These ten-year-old opinions now require some modification, as Volume II shows: Le Fanu's available complete in fifty-two volumes from an American reprint house and Professor Robert Lee Wolf has done splendidly by Carleton in another reprint series. The Oxford Standard Authors edition of Moore's poems is long out of print, still we have never had comparable editions of Mangan and Ferguson and all Professor Raffoldi's long bibliography of Mangan's magazine pieces suggests the difficulty of confronting an editor, but Jacques Chou is soon to publish a definitive bibliography; the logical next step is a definitive edition. At the moment there is not even good Mangan selection in print, but a Professor Raffoldi asks rather plaintively, "How many times will he have to be discovered?" If the present book does nothing more than convince English and American scholarly publishers of the importance of Mangan, that would be a notable achievement; but obviously it is destined to a long, useful life as a work of reference. Better still, it challenges every student of Anglo-Irish literature to view the subject in the context of world literature.

ART AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Posing on four legs

By Graham Reynolds

JUDY EGERTON:
British Sporting and Animal Paintings
1665-1867
JUDY EGERTON and DUDLEY SNELGROVE:
British Sporting and Animal Drawings
1590-1867
The Gallery for the Yale Center for British Art, £70 the set.

ANTHONY VANDERVELL AND CHARLES COLES:
Game and the English Landscape
The Influence of the Chase on Sporting Art and Scenery
1590, Debreit's Peerage Ltd. £14.95.
0 905649 32 X

Robert Burton counted it among the miseries of scholars that "because they cannot ride a horse, which every clown can do... they are laughed to scorn, and accounted silly tools by our gallants". For three centuries the melancholic and unathletic students of art have exacted their revenge for this downy laughter. They have drawn a rigid distinction between "paintings" and "sporting paintings", and refused to consider the latter worthy of study. Dr Waagen, audaciously taking notes of British collections in the mid-nineteenth century, ignored all sporting paintings except a few by Stubbs and the Woodtons at Longleat. Collector Douglas, eighth Duke of Devonshire, had an "unconquerable taste for every kind of horse", nonetheless hung his favourite paintings of animals in his private rooms while the state apartments of Hamilton Palace were embellished by Old Masters.

In forming his remarkably comprehensive collection of British painting, Paul Mellon has included some 400 sporting and animal pictures among 1700 paintings, whilst about a third of his 6,500 drawings have sport and animals as their subject; these works are listed, discussed and amply reproduced in two catalogues published by the Tate Gallery for the Yale Center for British Art. The *British Sporting and Animal Paintings* shows once again that enthusiastic and enlightened collecting is itself a creative form of scholarship. The collection and these catalogues support in the most effective way Mr Mellon's own belief that "British sporting art has always, blindly and mistakenly, been grossly underrated."

Since so much original research into the history of art is now published in catalogues, it is essential that the entries should convey information in a literate and readable form. Judy Egerton has triumphantly fulfilled her obligations in this regard. All too often art catalogues recall O's description of the continental Bible: "let us peruse [the text] over with italics and numerals, print it in double columns, with a marginal gutter on either side, each gutter pouring down an only flow of references and cross references", the main difference being that the references, in small pica, are generally



Glasgow style

By David Walker

APRIL MCKINCHIE:
Charles Leslie Mackintosh:
The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs
220p. Unpublished black-and-white illustrations, 26 colour plates. Letterworth Press, £30. 0 7188 2376 4

This generously proportioned volume is yet another product of the great analytical publishing industry centred on the University of Glasgow's Mackintosh and Whistler collections, initiated and inspired by its first director, John Russell. The late Andrew Mackintosh, who completed the same volume, *Charles Leslie Mackintosh: Watercolours* (1978), which included over 100 colour plates and 200 black-and-white illustrations, was necessarily

more selective in his choice of material. Mackintosh's progressive, unrepentant, and uncompromising commitment has made Mackintosh's work a subject of intense and continuing interest. The catalogue contains all the furniture and interior designs that Mackintosh created, but not the

textile designs which formed a major element of his later practice, an undertaking made possible by the survival of many of his drawings and - hardly less fortunate - the job books of Hopeyman, Keppie, and Mackintosh which are unusually detailed, itemizing even the smallest pieces of furniture. The vast majority of their entries have been identified, and related either to the actual pieces or to old photographs to a degree which can only be described as astonishingly definitive. The interiors at Craigknoll, Glasgow, of 1893 and 1897 and the rich but relatively conservative woodwork at Gourcock Parish Church, of 1899 may be the only really large-scale discoveries, but many individual pieces of great quality have been brought to notice for the first time. Already-known works like Queen Margaret College, the Argyle Street, Glasgow, and the House, all in greater or lesser degrees, gain greatly in significance with photographs not previously published, those of Argyle Street especially, reproduced on rather too small a scale to be appreciated adequately. All are able to be appreciated in a new way, with illustrations and detailed, year by year, perspective commentaries on the development of style and finish, providing a clarity and insight which any new found piece can only be appreciated in a new way.

"Complete" can only be relative to what is known at the time of writing. Billcliffe does not discuss architecture except where it has a direct relevance to recorded interiors and furniture. Thus the book does not include the Redlands interiors, the lost or dispersed interiors at Mossdale, or interior details of his two board schools, or any information on the as yet unpublished domestic commissions at Faldre and Whistlerfield, included in his RIBA nomination statement in 1905. Moreover we do not know to what extent Mackintosh assisted with the furnishings of Keppie's jobs when the latter was headmaster or on his travels, as these have never been systematically examined: some at least, like "The Mary Acre" at Brechlin, contain Mackintosh's design which is certainly not Keppie's and may not always be the work of assistants. It is also possible that the work of Mackintosh may still yield a few surprises as most of the papers relating to them have been destroyed.

It is much to be hoped that Mr Billcliffe will not turn his attention to the secondary figures of the Glasgow style. None would deserve so comprehensive a catalogue as this but several would certainly deserve it. Mackintosh's work is a subject of intense and continuing interest, and it is a pity that the Glasgow style is often treated as a mere footnote to his work. The Glasgow style is a subject of intense and continuing interest, and it is a pity that the Glasgow style is often treated as a mere footnote to his work. The Glasgow style is a subject of intense and continuing interest, and it is a pity that the Glasgow style is often treated as a mere footnote to his work.

From hot to cold

By John Dreyfus

RUARI MCLEAN:
The Thames and Hudson Manual of Typography
216pp. 188 illustrations. Thames and Hudson, £8.95 (paperback), £4.95.
0 500 67022 6

Experiences counts in writing a manual on a subject as broad as typography - defined in this work as "the art, or skill, of designing communication by means of the printed word" and therefore as involving the design of books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, leaflets, posters, advertisements, tickets, in fact anything that is printed and communicated to other people by means of words.

Ruari McLean first studied the subject in 1936 at the Shakespeare Head Press, where his mentor was Bernard Newdigate, a typographer with a strong prejudice against mechanical typesetting, and where one of the hand presses had belonged to William Morris.

In his own career, Ruari McLean has combined wide practical experience of design for printing with a fair amount of writing and editing; and he has worked during the period of transition from typesetting to filmsetting. One of the merits of his manual, falls short of its author's precept. One of his three rules for legibility is that "words should be set close to each other (about as far apart as the width of the letter 'n') and that 'continuous text' will be set with close and regular spacing between words, not irregular and wide spacing that calls attention to itself and is an obstruction to smooth reading". On many pages of this manual there are lines in which a letter the width of an 'n' could easily have been placed in the gaps between words. The only other disappointing feature is the sparse two-page index.

If it had a definitive or absolute meaning, which it does not have, it is a perfect word, neither scientific nor precise. If you say that 'legible', you only mean that you can read it; you do not know whether I can." He does not have a great respect for a great deal of legibility research concerned with straightforward reading matter for literate adults, but he nevertheless recognizes the need for research of one kind or another before almost any typographical problem is tackled. It is indicative of his approach that in his section on newspaper and magazine typography he carefully lists eight important questions that a designer needs to ask before designing a page.

Mr McLean can speak from experience on matters other than book design. He has previously written a book on magazine design and has been typographical adviser to the *Conventer* and to *The Observer*. (He has also served as Honorary Typographical Adviser to Her Majesty's Stationery Office). Nevertheless, book designers will find a great deal to interest them in this manual which covers their subject both historically and with practical advice. The illustrations include a generous showing of work by Jan Tschichold for Penguin Books and others, and by the American type and book-designer, W. A. Dwiggins, whose work is little known in the UK.

John Dreyfus

